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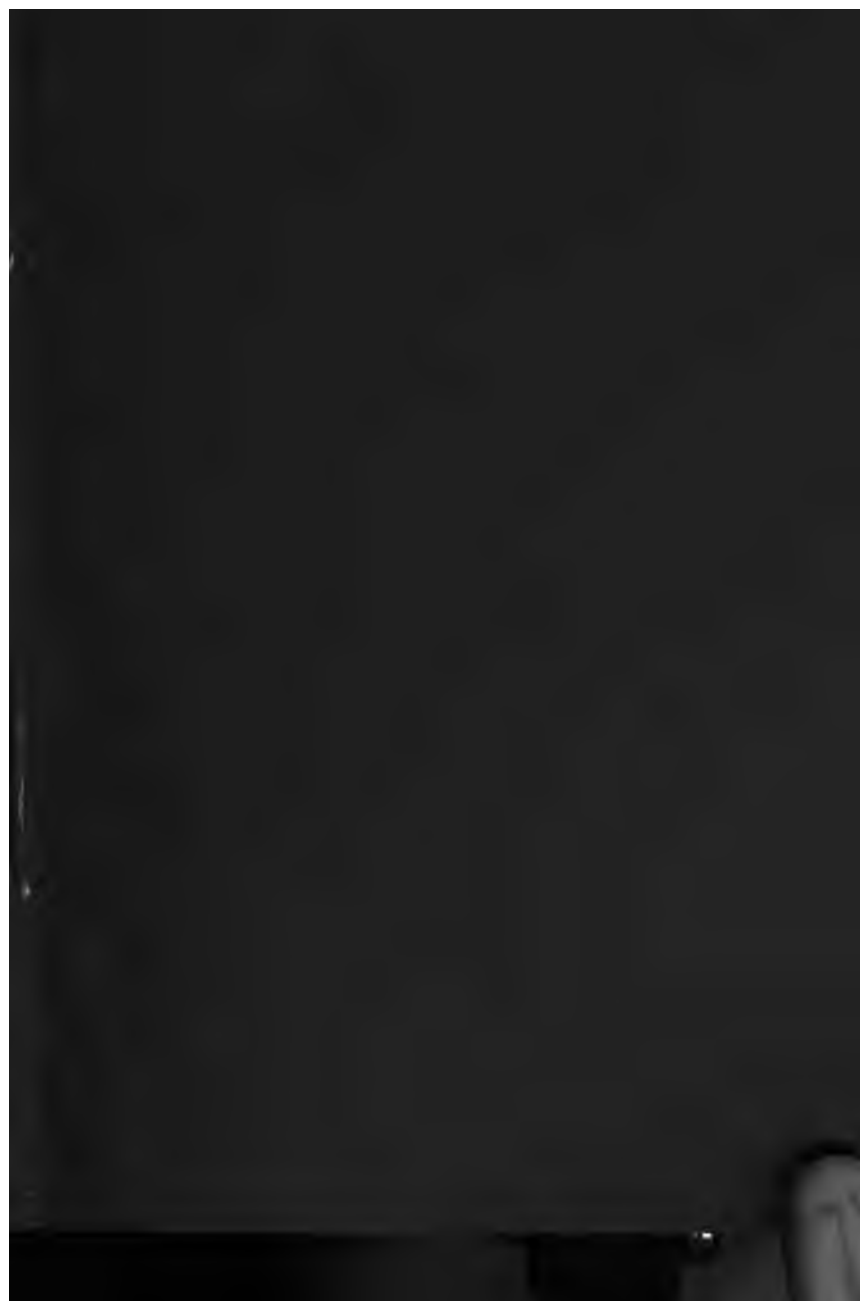
THE
Garden of Gethsemane.



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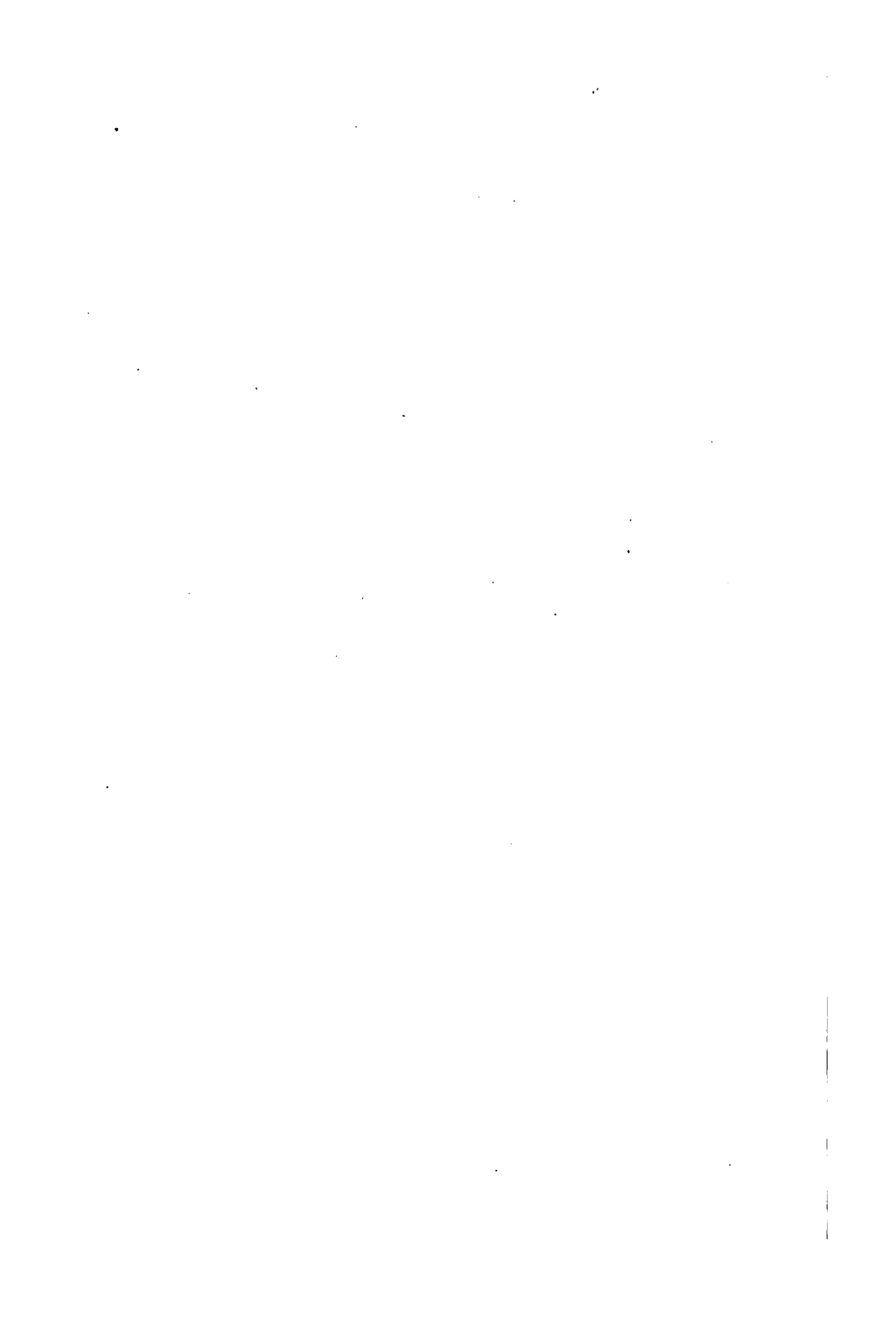
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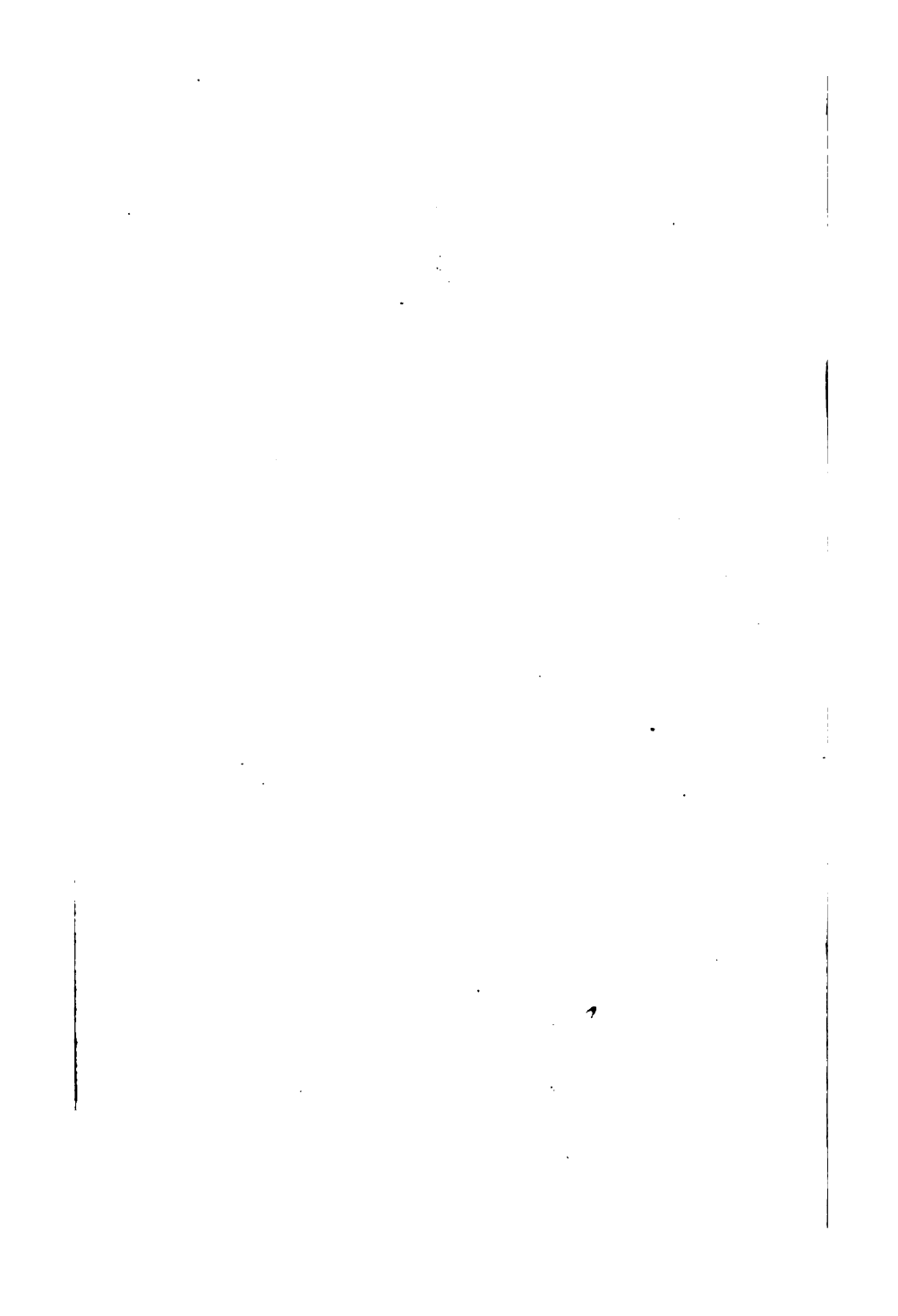


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THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.



THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

BY THE
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OF FREE ST. JOHN'S, EDINBURGH.



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NOTE.

NOTES bearing on certain passages in the Volume will be found at the end. The passages are marked by a number which points out the particular note referred to, under its own chapter.

For the sake of brevity the Revised Version of the New Testament is indicated by R. V.

CONTENTS.



I.	PAGE
THE OLD HISTORIANS	I
II.	
THE MIDNIGHT VISIT	15
III.	
SORROW LIKE NO OTHER SORROW	21
IV.	
BROKEN HEARTS HEALED	32
V.	
REFUGE IN GOD	39
VI.	
"THY WILL BE DONE"	46
VII.	
WRESTLING WITH GOD	56
VIII.	
SLEEPING WATCHMEN... ..	74

	IX.	PAGE
TIME TO AWAKE		82
	X.	
UNEQUALLY YOKED		94
	XI.	
STEADFASTLY SETTING HIS FACE		102
	XII.	
THE TRAITOR		112
	XIII.	
SELF-SURRENDER		123
	XIV.	
SUCCESSORS OF JUDAS		131
	XV.	
THREATENED RESCUE		139
	XVI.	
THE ROYAL CAPTIVE		152
	XVII.	
THE GREAT MYSTERY		159
	XVIII.	
MIGHTY TO SAVE		171
<hr/>		
NOTES		183

I.

THE OLD HISTORIANS.

LITTLE is known about the Garden of Gethsemane in the days of Jesus Christ. That it possessed a history of deepest interest, we may infer from the fact that it was a favourite place of resort for Him and His apostles. With the single exception, however, of His last visit to the garden, what transpired there remains in the meantime sealed. It is proposed to trace His footsteps during that visit.

Before entering the field marked out, it may be interesting to glance at *the primary sources* whence information regarding the subject is derived. These sources are, the three synoptical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the Gospel of John. We assume that these four Gospels were written by the authors whose name

they bear, and that these authors wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Each of them possessed *special qualifications* for the task. If we confine attention, as we mean to do, to those parts of the Gospels which bear on the visit to Gethsemane, *Matthew* was one of the eight apostles who were stationed at the entrance to the garden, and witnessed the proceedings in connection with the arrest. *John* was a still closer witness; for, in addition to enjoying the advantages of *Matthew*, he was one of three apostles selected by Jesus to go with Him beyond the entrance to the garden, and therefore heard and saw even more than *Matthew*. *Mark*, though not himself one of the apostolic band, through his connection with the apostles, especially, if tradition speaks the truth, with Peter, another of the three, was next door to John in point of advantages. And *Luke*, the close companion of an apostle who, though born out of due time, was not a whit behind the chiefest of them, was, both by mental culture and literary re-

search, eminently qualified for his task as a historian.

And yet, with all the peculiar fitness of these men to write biographies of Jesus, there was a manifest necessity that they should be *inspired*. If, according to Channing, "the narratives of the Evangelists bear the marks of truth, perhaps beyond all other histories," that is largely the reason. For, to go no farther than Gethsemane, the apostles who were nearest Jesus might barely be able to see and hear all that was designed by God for permanent record; and even had they been able, sleep for a time overpowered them. If succeeding generations were to have the conscious satisfaction of infallible truth in the narratives, it was essential that the writers should have enjoyed the fulfilment of the promise which Christ that evening made; "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

That promise was made good to the writers,

and the result has been a splendid mosaic, a four-sided narrative of Jesus's life, forming a complete and perfect history, marked by all the unity which the presence of one Divine Spirit of inspiration cannot fail to produce, and all the variety which must flow from four different human writers, each distinguished by his own individuality and independence.

Many things would conspire to produce *variety* in the writers of the Gospels. They wrote at different times, in different places, and with different aims. Their sources of information were so far different, and so too were their points of observation, their powers of description, and their modes of expression. Their peculiar temperaments, training, and attainments would also produce dissimilarity of form and colour in their narratives.

There is another thing which would influence their writings. In so far as they had opportunity of knowing what had been already recorded, they would naturally allow that element to weigh in determining the shape

which their narrative should assume. Though none of the Gospels appear to have been intended to be merely supplementary, in point of fact each supplements the others. With the exception of John, who wrote his Gospel years after the other Gospels were afloat, it is impossible to say with certainty to what extent the different writers had acquaintance with one another's writings. It is very difficult not to believe that John (I) had the other Gospels before him. This of itself would be sufficient to account for the fact, made so much of by some, that John, though one of the three with Jesus in His agony, does not refer to it in his Gospel. Is there not ample reason for his silence, if he found that the other Gospels had given the agony a prominent place? Certainly his silence is not to be put to the account of unwillingness to refer to those parts of Jesus's history which might be supposed to contrast unfavourably with the Divine side of His character, so fully illustrated by John in his Gospel. Had he wished to avoid such reference, he would not

6 *The Garden of Gethsemane.*

have noticed as he, and he alone, has done the feelings which Jesus displayed at the grave of Lazarus (John 11 : 33), and in connection with the visit of certain Greeks (John 12 : 27) ; feelings, in the latter case, so akin to those displayed at Gethsemane, that some insist on the two events being identical (2). Besides, though John does not give an account of the agony, he, and only he, narrates words used by Jesus after His arrest, which carry us back to the agony, and are, in fact, a continuation of what He said during it (John 18 : 11).

With respect to this and other differences between the forms of the Gospels, it is natural and fair to seek explanation, if it can be given. But it is neither natural nor fair to assume the attitude taken up by many of demanding, either what *they* shall regard as a satisfactory explanation of these differences, or a surrender of our faith in the Gospels. Nothing is easier than to put puzzling questions on the point in hand. Were our faith in the Gospels to be made to depend on what might be held by different

people as satisfactory answers to such questions, there would be a speedy end to faith.

Confining ourselves to Gethsemane, let us glance at the different accounts of it which are given by the four writers, with the view of marking the *characteristics* of each as they are there displayed.

To take them in the common order. *Matthew's* account tastes, as usual, of the wine of the Old Testament, and in that way recommends itself to his countrymen. Twice he refers to it. On the first occasion he narrates a saying of Jesus which none of the others give. Addressing Peter, after he had drawn his sword, and cut off Malchus's ear, Jesus says, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" And immediately after he adds, what none of the others notice, "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" On the second occasion on which Matthew refers to the Old Testament, Mark does it likewise. But there is a charac-

teristic difference. According to Mark, Jesus says, "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not ; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled" (3). True to himself, when Matthew tells the same thing he puts it in the fuller form, "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." There is yet a third occasion on which this characteristic of Matthew comes out ; but it lies only so far within our range. Of the price paid to the traitor for the blood of Jesus, Matthew alone gives the exact amount—thirty pieces of silver ; and in that he sees a prophecy of his favourite Old Testament fulfilled.

In the small space which is travelled, *Mark's* individuality no less strongly shows itself. As usual, his pen is that of a ready writer, graphic and minute. In reference to what took place when Jesus said, "Behold he is at hand that doth betray me," the other writers are content to narrate, "while he (Jesus) yet spake;" but Mark must note the fact—"immediately, while he yet spake." Particular words seem to ring in his

heart, and are produced by his pen. His narrative of Jesus's prayer is not simply, "Father," but "Abba, Father." He must note the word used by Jesus immediately before His arrest (*ἀπέχει*), "It is enough." Judas's instructions regarding the arrest are, according to him, not simply, "hold him fast," but also, "*lead him away safely.*" It is Mark alone who records—one might almost say, who alone would record—the strange incident of the young man who suddenly makes his appearance soon after Jesus's capture.

In connection with Gethsemane, as well as throughout his whole Gospel, *Luke* preserves his character. The sympathetic fellow-man, the accomplished scholar, the observant physician, the painstaking historian, all come out. It is he alone who records the pang which it apparently cost Jesus to separate Himself, even by a stone's cast, from the three apostles. And it is he alone that informs us of the supreme agony of Jesus in its physical aspect, "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and demanding the presence of an angel to

strengthen Him. The other writers tell us that Jesus found the apostles asleep; only he furnishes the explanation. Matthew and Mark inform us of the severance of the ear of Malchus by Peter's sword; John adds the fact that it was the right ear; Luke tells us all this, but he further informs us that an immediate cure was effected, and he explains how it was done.

John, the loyal and the loving, produces a history true, in point of fact, to the Master whom he loved so well; and, in point of style, true to himself. Towards the writers of the other Gospels he exhibits the utmost delicacy; but at the same time he writes as one who feels that he had been in the heart of the events recorded, who has his own standpoint, and is able and anxious to give his contribution to the completion of the portrait of Him who was "fairer than the children of men." It is years since the awful midnight hour was passed in Gethsemane, but his eye still sees the glare of the torches and lanterns through the foliage of the garden; and his pen must record it. The

scene that took place in connection with Jesus's surrender, unrecorded by the rest, is vividly before him, and he must present it. "There they are ; there stands Judas ; and there is He who spake as never man spake, and who never spake more royally than on that occasion." And John has a piece of interesting information regarding the name of the man whose ear was severed by the cut of a sword, and the name of the man who wielded it. Whatever was the reason, none of the writers of the Gospels had given these particulars. John, who in some way or other had access to the high priest's household, had come to know that Malchus was the name of the wounded man ; and though none of the apostles could be ignorant that Peter was the assailant, John touches in both names on the canvas.

But while the four Gospels are the primary sources whence information about the Garden of Gethsemane is derived, there are various other sources which help to support and swell that information. In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter

speedily appears, and leaves traces of personal knowledge of Gethsemane. Among the first words which he publicly utters, forty days after Jesus's arrest, are these: "Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesús." Similar traces are to be found in his writings. In his First Epistle (1: 6) he makes use of the expression, "Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Of these words, the two most important, "in heaviness" (*λυπηθέντες*) and "temptations" (*πειρασμοῖς*), are prominent in the narratives of the garden. In the same chapter (ver. 11) he speaks of "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow;" and almost immediately he adds, what there was no special reason for introducing, but what the memory of Gethsemane could have suggested, "which things the *angels* desire to look into" (Luke 22: 43). Apparently in the same line of thought, he proceeds (ver. 13), "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober." This idea he afterwards repeats. It was prominent in Gethsemane. His reference to civil authority is very marked (1 Pet.

2 : 13), and recalls a memorable circumstance in connection with the arrest. There is also a striking word which he applies to himself ; a *witness* (μάρτυς) of the sufferings of Christ " (1 Pet. 5 : 1). In his Second Epistle (1 : 16), when he refers to the transfiguration, he uses a still stronger word ; " we were *eye-witnesses* (ἐπόπται) of his majesty." But if " the sufferings of Christ " include Gethsemane, as they cannot fail to do, the term " witness," rather than " eye-witness," seems peculiarly appropriate when you take into account the circumstances of the garden.

It would be easy to trace in other apostolic writings, expressions which might fairly be regarded as contributing to throw light on the transactions of Gethsemane. The whole Bible does it. How many prophetic utterances, in word and symbol, find more or less interpretation and fulfilment in these transactions ! (Pss. 22 : 14 ; 69 : 20 ; Isa. 63 : 3.) It cannot be otherwise when all Scripture is given by inspiration of the one Spirit.

In the whole of Scripture that Spirit still breathes. He is the guide to Gethsemane. If we would read its narrative aright, we must place ourselves under His instructions and influence. The grand central figure of Gethsemane has not passed away into the silence of death. At God's right hand Jesus still lives and reigns, and to all that ask, He will give His Spirit, as the interpreter of His life on earth. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

II.

THE MIDNIGHT VISIT.

THE time occupied by the visit of Jesus and His apostles to the Garden of Gethsemane in all probability little exceeds one of the closing hours of His life. So important, however, are these hours, that a well-known French sceptic, referring to them, hesitates not to say, "Each moment of this eventful period is solemn, and counts more than whole ages in the history of humanity."

Jesus and His apostles had assembled in an upper room of a house in Jerusalem, for the purpose of observing the feast of the Passover. According to the Jewish mode of computation, the regular time for its observance was the evening following the 14th of the month Nisan. Preponderance of argument seems in favour of the opinion that Jesus kept the Passover at the

stated time (1). The weather was cold, but a full moon would be shining on the crowded and jubilant population of the Holy City.

Fortunately, we are in possession of at least a part of the priceless wealth of word which Jesus that evening showered on the apostles. His conversation naturally turned largely on His approaching death. More than once during His ministry He had seized an opportunity of gently breaking to the apostles the secret of His early departure. He had not now many hours to live, and both by word and action He plainly indicated that His time had come. The Passover which they were celebrating, and the Holy Supper which sprung out of it, were both symbolic rehearsals of His death. And His utterances could not be mistaken. "One of you shall betray me," He said ; and when Judas Iscariot stood revealed as the traitor, Jesus simply added, "That thou doest, do quickly."

It is interesting to know that one of the last acts of the solemn service in which Jesus and His apostles were engaged was *Praise*. "They

sung an hymn ;" probably that portion of the great Hallel which embraces the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms. Not many days before, Jesus had taken occasion to refer to a verse in the 118th Psalm as prophetic of Himself: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." With how deep emotion these words would now be sung !

It was probably toward midnight when Jesus and His apostles left the house, passed through the city gate, and proceeded in the direction of the Mount of Olives. On their way they would cross the deep ravine of the valley of Jehoshaphat, through which the brook Kedron threads its uncertain course. Even though the apostles had not been informed of their destination, they would have no difficulty in conjecturing it. At a short distance from the city there was a spot familiar to them all. It was a garden, and bore the name of Gethsemane, or Oil Press. Tradition points out the exact spot ; and some olive trees still standing, possibly the natural representatives of trees then in existence, are

supposed to confirm it ; but beyond the general locality nothing can be identified with certainty.

To all appearance, that night, external Nature gave no sign of sympathy with sorrowing hearts. Bright moonbeams, trembling on the surrounding foliage, suffusing with softened light the slopes of Olivet in front, and silvering the pinnacle of the Temple behind, would throw a magic charm around the scene, in strange contrast to the tumult which must have agitated the breast of one and all in that little band. So well can Nature, when need be, "keep the secret of her great Governor." As they passed along there would be intervals of unbroken silence ; but even if, before the upper room was left, Jesus had spoken to them of the desertion which that night awaited Him, it is not unlikely that it would be again referred to. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night ; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

There is something strikingly heroic in this midnight visit to Gethsemane. Throughout His

ministry Jesus had shown Himself sensitive about unnecessarily doing anything which might prematurely place Him in the hands of His enemies. But the moment that His hour is come He advances to the closing scene with high determination and unfaltering step. All that was to happen was not only according to His knowledge, but according to His choice. Never did dying man give last directions with the lofty composure with which Jesus makes all the preparations which lead Him down to death. The time, the place, the circumstances of His arrest are deliberately arranged.

On His arrival at Gethsemane He stations eight of the apostles as a watch near the entrance to the garden. "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Matt. 26 : 36). The remaining three, Peter, James, and John, He takes along with Him to some recess at a little distance. His choice of them was only in keeping with previous selections for special privileges. It was they who had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. Perhaps that was a

reason why they were with Him now. They had seen Him in His exaltation ; it was well that they should also see Him in His humiliation. But, in addition, since then, these three had been peculiarly loud in their professions of loyalty to Him. It was therefore important that James and John should see with their eyes what drinking of their Master's cup implied ; and Peter, what bearing of that Master's cross involved. Apart from other considerations, in associating these three apostles with Him, Jesus was consulting the welfare of the Church in all ages. On a previous occasion He had instructed His disciples, in matters affecting testimony, to act in accordance with the law of Moses, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. He was now Himself acting on that principle, and giving the Church security for the truthfulness of the gospel narratives.

III.

SORROW LIKE NO OTHER SORROW.

DURING His ministry Jesus had more than once betrayed profound emotion, as if some heavy burden oppressed His spirit. Latterly that emotion had visibly increased. At the grave of Lazarus He had been seen to weep ; and still more recently, in connection with the visit of some Greeks, He had been heard to say, "Now is my soul troubled." Throughout the evening the apostles must have been sensible of their Master's depression ; but the cheering and even triumphant strains in which He had addressed them were fitted to inspire the hope that the deepest gloom was over. It was only commencing. A darker cloud than any they had ever seen was gathering around Him. According to Matthew (26 : 37), "He began to

be sorrowful and very heavy" (*λυπείσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν*, "sorrowful and sore troubled," R. V). According to Mark (14 : 33), "He began to be sore amazed and very heavy" (*ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν*, "greatly amazed and sore troubled," R. V.). Terms like these, piled above one another, express the deepest possible anguish.

It could not be pent up. Fixing on the three apostles a look, as we may well suppose, of unutterable love, He said (Matt. 26 : 38), "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (*περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου*). These words (exactly the same in Matthew and Mark) are capable of but one interpretation. Only on the occasion referred to had He used the expression, "My soul." It was now, He says, environed with sorrow even unto death. He felt as if, through sorrow, His human frame was on the verge of being rent in pieces.

Of such anguish what account can be given? Many attempts at explanation have been made, some of them utterly unworthy, others obviously

unsatisfactory. It is not enough to place distress so deep, and so peculiar, to the account of that fluctuation of feeling which may be found in the best regulated minds, and is not inconsistent even with a sinless nature. Nor can we refer it to bodily pain, for the narrative represents the body as affected by the mind, and not the mind as affected by the body. Had anything new then occurred, on the way to Gethsemane, calculated to inflict a fresh and deeper wound on Jesus's spirit? There is not the slightest appearance of that. Or, could it be that a glance at the past, that all-comprehensive glance which one sometimes gets in a moment, was stirring thoughts which, in the prospect of death, made Him quail? This has been insinuated (1). But nothing further from the truth could be conceived. Not an hour before, in a prayer remarkable for its calm, He had said to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Was He, then, appalled by the sight of the immediate future that lay before Him? Was He feeling

Himself already in the hands of His enemies? Was the iron of betrayal by one apostle and desertion by all entering His soul? Was He now, in imagination, a defenceless prisoner at the bar; a condemned malefactor hanging in shame and agony on the cross? In His circumstances it would have been impossible for Him not to realise all this, and with a fulness and vividness beyond conception. When it was realised, it would have been impossible for human nature in a healthy condition not to shrink from it. The apathy of stoicism is no part of Christianity. But, terrible as the prospect was, if the sufferings it revealed exceeded not those which other men have bravely borne, it would be degradation to the Son of man to suppose Him quailing at the sight. Dread of future suffering could be but one element of present sorrow. The gloom of Gethsemane was more than the mere shadow of Calvary.

How, then, shall the great agony, the strange disturbance of the equilibrium of Jesus's soul, be explained? Outside the Bible it is vain

to attempt to do it. But does not the Bible furnish a key with which we may unlock the mystery? And is not that key to be found in a great fact, pervading every portion of Scripture, viz., *the Suretyship which the Son of God voluntarily accepted, in connection with the fallen race of man?* In the language of inspiration, "Jesus was made a surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7 : 22).

Let us see what this suretyship in behalf of man involved. Of necessity it involved several things.

It required God's Son to *assume our nature*. He did it. "In the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philip. 2 : 6). He thus necessarily became partaker of our sinless infirmities. But He was more. As surety for man, He became *bearer of man's sorrows*. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53 : 4). On His shoulders He sustained the

weight of a world, groaning and travailing in pain together until now. And, if at the grave of a single inhabitant of earth He wept and groaned, what must have been His agony when, with an eye which swept the globe, He felt the whole weight of its crushing woe descending on Him ?

But suretyship demanded more than this. It required Him, *in man's stead, to be responsible for his offences*. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53 : 6). Or, as Peter puts it, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2 : 24). Or, as Paul presents it, God "hath made him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5 : 21). This responsibility necessarily brought Him into the closest contact with sin which it was possible for Him to have. Personally "he knew no sin." In one way, this formed protection against mental distress. He could not know the bitterest pang of human nature — remorse. But in another way His very sinlessness exposed Him, as sin-bearer, to an agony

which human nature cannot understand. Planted on the rock of unsullied purity, He was compelled to gaze on the surging ocean of a world's iniquities, which pressed Him on every side, and swept around His soul the waves of its abominations. How could He bear that beings formed in His image should wallow in such pollutions? And how could He endure that the love of His Father for these beings should be thus requited? It was an agony unspeakable for the Son of man to think that He was to be betrayed; it added a new drop to that agony to know that He was to be "*betrayed into the hands of sinners.*"

The assuming of responsibility for man's offences necessitated *the standing by their consequences*. Jesus hesitated not. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53: 5). So in the New Testament, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3: 18). In the

garden He had entered on the dreaddest stage of atonement (2). What that implied in its profoundest depths we are unable to conceive. But this we know: it involved *a temporary change in the attitude in which the Father and the Son stood to each other*. It could not be otherwise. Not that there was any diminution of the Father's love for the Son, or the Son's love for the Father. On the contrary, their mutual love was drawn into intenser expression. "Therefore doth my Father love me," Jesus said, "because I lay down my life." And immediately before setting out for Gethsemane, he said, "that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Still, sin is transgression of law, and God is Lawgiver, Judge, and King. Jesus was sin-bearer, and therefore, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed" (Isa. 53 : 10). God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8 : 32). And from that Son on the

cross was wrung the cry, "My God! my God!
why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46.)

"Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and
Father ;
Yea, once Immanuel's orphan cry His universe hath
shaken ;
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken.' "

Jesus's suretyship involved one other thing—
exposure to the concentrated forces of Satan. In
one of his epistles, John says, "For this purpose
the Son of God was manifested, that he might
destroy the works of the devil." Alive to this,
it was the purpose of the devil to destroy the
works of the Son of God. In the wilderness of
Judæa, Jesus had appeared as man's champion,
in conflict with the Tempter. When foiled, the
Tempter had left Him, but only "for a season."
The opportunity had again returned; the greatest
and the last. Knowing that he has but a short
time, the Tempter comes in great wrath, concen-
trating all his force on a final attempt to blast
the work of the Son of God. It is "the power
of darkness." The whole spiritual atmosphere

appears charged with Satanic influence. Satan seems everywhere (3). In the course of little more than an hour we find him taking possession of Judas (John 13 : 27), advancing toward Jesus (John 14 : 30), and fastening his greedy eyes on the apostles (Luke 22 : 31). Of all this Jesus was intensely conscious. What torture it must have been to Him, who shrank from the remotest contact with Satan, and who would fain have gathered His apostles together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings !

This, then, is the key which we put into the lock of the mystery of Jesus's great agony. Does it not fit it ? Even with the very imperfect estimate we can form of the circumstances in which, as man's surety, He was now placed, it were to make Him no man—it were to make Him weak, incapable of understanding the tremendous crisis, not to suppose His human nature shaken to its centre. The supposition that such was its condition corresponds with His own declaration, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

If this is the explanation of the Passion of Gethsemane, comparison between Jesus and all other human sufferers, the greatest and the best, becomes, beyond a certain point, impossible. Of such passion mankind has no experience and no measure. Jesus stands absolutely alone. The conviction that comparison is impossible is deepened, when you take into account His claims to be the Son of God as well as the Son of man. At first sight, the possession of this twofold nature seems fitted to ease the burden of His sorrow. Under certain conditions it would act in that way. Man's littleness is in some respects a shield in suffering. But these conditions were not at present in operation. Jesus's greatness as God and man would tend to expose Him to the full fury of the blast. Though confined to His human nature, His suffering would swell to the brim. "It was as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? Deeper than hell ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof was longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

IV.

BROKEN HEARTS HEALED.

IN the sorrow of the man Christ Jesus all men have the deepest personal interest. There are none who, in the course of their life, do not experience such moments of supreme agony, that they feel as if it were no exaggeration to say that they are "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."

(1) *Insupportable sorrow may spring from the pressure of the ills of life.* A whirlwind of misfortunes may sweep across a man's home, and leave it utterly desolate. Or, stinging pain may shoot through the quivering frame, without hope of respite sooner than the grave. Or, fair reputation may be blasted by secret tongues, without apparently the possibility of redress. Or, a mistake may have been committed, and the conse-

quences seem to be irremediable misery. In such cases, it may be no figure to say that the bodily frame is in danger of being rent by the mental agony. If it is a fact that the heart may physically give way under pressure of heavy grief, it cannot admit of doubt that a large portion of the human race dies, more or less, from the cause of a broken heart.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? There are both. Jesus Christ is the physician, and His sorrow is the balm. By His sorrow, the sorrow of all them that obey Him is healed. To no one indeed is suffering abolished; though certainly, the more God's natural and moral laws are obeyed, it will be diminished. But to the Christian its nature is changed. In the household of faith, suffering is purged of its corrosive elements, penalty, bondage, and terror, and is charged with the salutary ingredients of blessing, privilege, and love. Whether consciousness is always able for the utterance or not, Christianity in the heart puts it in our power to say, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing

that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope." And there is more. He who on earth bore our sorrows, in some mysterious way bears them in heaven. The same compassion which stirred the bosom of our fellow-sufferer in the days of His flesh stirs it still, and moves a mighty arm that moves hands on earth for the succour of the sorrowing. Such is His sympathy that in all our afflictions He is afflicted, and of every load He carries the weightier end. Why, then, even in the darkest hour, should we despair or despond ? Be of good cheer, Christian. In the face of some overwhelming trial it may be difficult not to feel as if Christ's words were a mockery, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." But you will be neither fool nor fanatic if, learning submission and obedience, and fixing your eye on the Man of Sorrows, you feel habitually about your sufferings, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

(2) *Insupportable sorrow may spring from the*

consciousness of sin. Sin, unrepented and unforgiven, presses on us by its guilt, and in us through its power. The latter pressure weakens the consciousness of the former. As the distribution of air through the vessels of the body renders it insensible to the weight of the superincumbent atmosphere, the presence of sin in us weakens the consciousness of the force of guilt lying on us. But when the eye is opened to the real state of things, we experience new feelings. We begin in a measure to understand sin's exceeding sinfulness, and a soul's exceeding sorrow. The sorrows of death may compass us, and the pains of hell get hold upon us. These are remarkable lines of Burns when, on one occasion, he was threatened with dangerous illness :

“ Is it departing pangs my soul alarms ?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode ?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms ;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.”

From such mental agony there is a way of deliverance. Christ is the way. Let us go to Him

with our bleeding heart, and accept Him as our surety. In Him we have "redemption through his blood." His soul was sorrowful unto death, that ours might be gladdened unto life eternal. If atonement has been made by our surety, we do not need to make it. We may, with grateful heart, begin to "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." Not that all sorrow in connection with our sin will be over. We may find it impossible sometimes to forget sins which God has forgotten. Now and then they may come into our mind with a force that threatens to overwhelm us. And as day by day new sins are added new grief will be stirred. To life's last hour we shall feel the presence and pressure of sin, and the keener our grief on account of it may become. But, *if we are striving against sin*, our sorrow may be mingled with joy. Our sin broke Christ's heart, that, touched by the gentle hand of the Holy Spirit, our heart might be broken, not with the sorrow of the world that worketh death, but that godly sorrow which

“worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.” A heart visited by such sorrow is a heart in process of being healed. “Behold this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you ; yea, what clearing of yourselves ; yea, what indignation ; yea, what fear ; yea, what vehement desire ; yea, what zeal ; yea, what revenge !” Sorrow of that kind consumes only the dross of our spirit. The more that operation proceeds, the purer and the brighter and the heavenlier our whole being will become. Let us only yield ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God ; by the working of the Holy Spirit in us, we shall find that He is able to purge our whole nature so as to present us “ faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy,” where the days of our mourning, because the days of our sinning, shall be ended.

What hatred, what horror of sin the sorrow of Jesus should inspire ! It is natural to feel toward many transgressions as if they were little more

than trifling defects or excusable infirmities. Even if the heart has been renewed, we may sometimes cast a longing eye on what is forbidden, and what we have abandoned ; and conscience for the time may be bribed into silence or lulled into sleep. But in the presence of sorrow like no other sorrow what aspect does sin of all kinds present ? Is it possible that we could with complacency do what constrained Jesus to say, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death " ? Shall we not flee from it ? Shall we not feel as if haunted by the piercing cry, " Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate " ? And shall not we rather cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, than hesitate to " cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit ; perfecting holiness in the fear of God " ?

V.

REFUGE IN GOD.

WHITHER does the whirlwind of Jesus's anguish carry Him? Straight to the bosom of His Father. To pour into that Father's ear His joys and sorrows was the strongest instinct of His nature, the action of His highest life. In every one of His recorded agonies He is seen holding communion with God. Despair He knew not. Hope in God burned perpetually, like a lamp within Him.

We are placed in peculiar circumstances. On us deep grief may, at one and the same time, exert two contrary forces; the one drawing us to God, the other from Him. We may feel an earnest desire to carry our sorrows to our heavenly Father; and yet, if there are stings of conscience in connection with them,

these stings will naturally tend to neutralise the desire.

In such a case we must treat reproaches of conscience as the greatest of our sorrows, and carry one and all without delay to the throne. We should pray as the Psalmist did, "Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins." It is the victory of faith to act on the resolution, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed." Why should not that victory be ours?

In His fellowship with the Father on this occasion Jesus must be entirely alone. Even the favoured three are not to be with Him. "Tarry ye here," He says to them (Matt. 26: 38). In this arrangement part of the history of Moses was repeating itself. At the time of the giving of the Law, Joshua, and Aaron with his sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel accompany Moses so far up Mount Sinai. At a certain point all are left behind except Joshua, who still accompanies Moses. But another point is reached, where Joshua remains, and

then Moses alone goes up to meet with God. Here, eight of the apostles were left at the entrance to the garden ; the other three accompanied Jesus so far, and now they also remain behind, while Jesus goes alone to hold communion with His Father. Apart from desire for secrecy in prayer, Jesus must have felt that such sorrow as His without a veil was too sacred for human eyes, and too terrible for human hearts.

But though Peter, James, and John were not to be with Jesus in bodily presence, they were to remain close to Him in spirit. He lays special injunctions on them : " Watch with me " (Matt. 26 : 38). He was to keep awake and watch ; He wished them to do the same. And why ? Did His heart crave their sympathy ? Did He feel that, though that sympathy might be powerless to bring relief from agony or danger, it would soothe and help Him to encounter them ? We cannot doubt it. It is a touch of human nature—" Watch with me." Explain it as we may, in time of trouble the consciousness that a human friend is near, even

though he is unable to succour, and though God is known to be nearer still and able to succour effectually, is itself consolation. To the Man Christ Jesus—the lonely One—the knowledge that loving men, however weak, were near would be comfort, even when He was holding the closest communion with an Omnipotent Father. But, soothing and supporting as the wakeful sympathy of the apostles might be, in asking them to watch with Him, Jesus was thinking of far more than any comfort of His own. He was most of all concerned about their quitting themselves like men, in this the hour of trial. They had expressed their willingness to die with Him; if now they would only watch with Him how much would be gained! The knowledge that it was “with Him” they were to watch would help them; but what they had to do was to “watch.” He had too good reason for saying so.

It was but a short distance that Jesus removed from the apostles. Matthew and Mark (who use the same expression) speak inde-

finitely. Luke, however (22 : 41), helps us to form a definite conception of the distance by calling it "about a stone's cast ;" the distance which a stone would go if carelessly thrown—perhaps a few dozen of yards. The definite statement of distance is important, as bearing on the question of testimony as to what took place. Of course much depends on the nature of the spot to which Jesus retired, and the length of time during which the apostles kept awake ; but at the distance specified, in the still night, and the bright moonshine, a great deal might be heard and seen. In removing even to this short distance Jesus would naturally feel a pang. Luke seems to have caught it and has stereotyped it in the expression which he uses : " he was withdrawn from them " (" parted from them," R. V.), as if a kind of wrench had been needed.

Jesus is now alone with God. We are permitted to turn aside and see this great sight. Let us put off our shoes from our feet, for the place whercon we stand is holy ground. " Be-

hold the Lamb of God!" He kneels, He falls on His face—on the ground—and prays to His Father. He in whose presence angels veil their faces with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," as Mediator, is on His knees, lying prostrate on the cold ground at midnight, pouring out His heart unto God. Is this *His* place for prayer? How different a lot He has marked out for me! "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." And yet I sometimes murmur.

"Ever when tempted, make me see,
Beneath the olive's moon-pierced shade,
My God, alone, outstretched and bruised,
And bleeding, on the earth He made."

And is this the reverence which *He* feels toward the Majesty on high? Ashamed I may well be of the deepest reverence which I have ever felt. I am indeed invited to come boldly unto the throne of grace, through Christ Jesus, the High Priest; but if such was the High Priest's own

reverence, how profound ought mine to be! It is when drawing near to the throne, under the shadow of Christ's wing, that we are counselled to have "grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." The sweetest fellowship with God must not be allowed to degenerate into undue familiarity. The happiest consciousness of God's Fatherhood is compatible with the deepest humility, and ought to be always producing it.

VI.

"THY WILL BE DONE."

THE prayer of Jesus is recorded in each of the synoptical Gospels. According to Matthew, He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26 : 39). According to Mark, He "prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee ; take away this cup from me ; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14 : 35). According to Luke, His words were, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22 : 42).

(1) *The expression of Jesus's will is plain.*
"Let this cup pass from me." The "hour" of

which Mark speaks is evidently the same as the cup. The designation of the cup is emphatic ; " this cup"—a very different cup, in some respects, from that which Jesus shortly before had held in His hand, and of which He had invited the apostles to drink. It was a very different cup, and yet it had been symbolised by the other. There is no mistaking what Jesus meant by it. It was the sum of that exceeding sorrow which His soul had been tasting. From draining that cup He now recoiled. How could He but do that ? He was a man—He had a will, pure and perfect, still a human will. How could He but intensely shrink from a cup of more than earthly bitterness ?

Who of us does not in a measure understand Him ? Every now and then we see in the Lord's hand a cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture. He seems ready to put it into our hand. We instinctively cry, " Let this cup pass from me." Perhaps, for instance, we appear to be on the verge of ruin. Our means have been invested in some commercial scheme which

threatens to give way. But there is still a glimmering of hope. God could avert the calamity. With poverty and humiliation staring us in the face, out of the depths we pray, "Let this cup pass from me." Or, a fair young mother seems to be suddenly called on to leave the world. The weeping children, scarcely conscious of their threatened loss, are kneeling around the dying bed. The father is in despair. Could not God turn aside the threatened blow? In agony he prays, "Let this cup pass from me." If in a measure we understand Jesus in His prayer, in such cases as these He altogether understands us, and sympathises with us. Such bitter cries bring back Gethsemane to His heart, and make Him press us the more closely to His bosom.

(2) *The conditions of Jesus's will are marked.* "O my Father, if it be possible." "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee." "Father, if thou be willing." All the Evangelists represent Him addressing God as *Father*. He does that in all His great sorrows, as if He

felt that at such times He must lie close to God. At the grave of Lazarus He lifts up His eyes and says, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." When, in connection with the visit of certain Greeks, His soul is troubled, He twice addresses God as Father. At the cross He prays, "Father, forgive them," and His expiring words are, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The two expressions, "if it be possible," and "if thou be willing," when applied to God amount to one and the same thing. All that is consistent with His nature is possible with Him, and He can will only such. What He wills, therefore, is possible; and what is possible, and for His glory, He wills.

But why should Jesus say, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me"? He could not surely be desiring that the work which He had come to accomplish—man's salvation, so glorifying to God—should be brought to a stand. He knew that that work was to be accomplished by suffering and death. Long ago He had told His disciples that "the Son of man must suffer

many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain." And He could be in no doubt as to His Father's will in the matter. He had spoken of laying down His life, and said that this was in accordance with a commandment received of His Father. Was then, that eye, which with eagle glance was wont to penetrate the counsel of God, losing any of its lustre? Was that arm, which in the wilderness had parried Satan's blows so skilfully, forgetting any of its cunning? Were those feet becoming tardy which had run so swiftly in the way of God's commandments? Was that heart, once so brave, shrinking from the battle for which, till now, it had been so keen? Nay. With nothing which Jesus had previously said or done was the petition He now presented inconsistent. But when He had tasted a cup whose bitterness made His soul "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," it was only a proof of His real humanity that He should feel *a yearning for the possibility of some other mingling of that cup*, which should still be in

harmony with His Father's will and purposes. This yearning He was now uttering in the ear of that Father to whom all things were possible.

We are safe in following Jesus. We know not what we should pray for as we ought. How many things are earnestly desired by us, regarding which we may be for a long time uncertain as to what the will of God is! If we have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," that Spirit will help our infirmities, and teach us how to pray, "If it be possible," "If thou be willing, let ~~this~~ cup pass from me."

Final issues are often very different from what present providences seem to indicate. Our heavenly Father will not misunderstand our clinging to the last hope, our hoping against hope; and, with the memory of Gethsemane before Him, our Intercessor will not disregard our oft-repeated prayer.

(3) *The submission of Jesus's will is complete.*
"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

A certain amount of time is taken up in reading the different clauses of Jesus's prayer, but the thoughts embodied in them are simultaneous. The words now quoted rule the whole, and give all the clauses tone and texture. It is easy to fancy one who has presented some earnest petition to God, and become hopeless of a favourable answer, using the words, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," and doing it in a spirit of petulance or pride. In uttering them Jesus is expressing His joyous choice of the Father's will. He is not ready to adopt it only if He cannot have His own. From the beginning He has chosen and gloried in His Father's will in preference to His own ; for the regulation of His own ; as His own ; as holy, just, and good. There is nothing He would less desire than the substitution of His own for His Father's will. "Not my will, but thine be done." And there is nothing He more desires than that His Father's will should be carried out. "Thy will *be done.*" "Even though the doing of it be the drinking of the cup, 'thy will *be done.*' Thy

will done is glory to Thy throne, and gladness to Thy universe."

Let us try to feel as Jesus did. When, in ignorance of our Father's will, time after time, we lay any desire before Him, let us seek to do it in hearty submission to that will, whatever it may turn out to be. Nothing could be more unwise than pressing our will on God irrespective of His. In the wilderness of Sinai the Israelites lusted exceedingly, and tempted God. Flesh they *would* have—*must* have. What was the result? "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." On the other hand, when, in ignorance of God's will, day by day we spread some petition before Him honestly desiring that His will shall be done even when ours comes to be crossed, we may speedily find that we have more than prevailed with God. The answers which are returned to prayer make it very manifest that God's foolishness is wiser than man's wisdom, and that the perfection of wisdom is God's will. The commercial scheme in which our means were

invested may give way; we may have to face the dreaded poverty and humiliation; and yet, through the wondrous kindness of our Father in heaven, our home may be happier than before, and brighter days than ever be at hand. The fair young mother may be taken away, the household may sit in darkness; and yet by the sadness of the countenance the heart may be made better, and heaven be more than ever sought as the abiding home. So long as there was hope that the loved one might remain on earth, the throne of grace was besieged by prayers; now, even if it were known that one prayer might bring her back, that prayer dare not be presented.

“We sought to stay

An angel on the earth, a spirit ripe

For heaven; and Mercy, in her love, refused;

Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least!

Most gracious when she seemed the most to frown!”

In his essay on Burns, Carlyle says: “Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with Necessity; begins even when we have surrendered to Necessity, as the most part only

do ; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have reconciled ourselves to Necessity ; and thus in reality triumphed over it, and felt that in Necessity we are free." Substitute for Necessity the will of our Father in heaven, and we have the conditions of Christian manhood. "It begins when we have in any way made truce with our heavenly Father's will ; it begins even when we have surrendered to it ; and it begins joyfully and hopefully when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have reconciled ourselves to it ; we then in reality triumph over it, and feel that in that will we are free." The lowest point of degradation was reached when a created being, radiant in glory, set his will in opposition to that of God, and was thrust down to darkness, with his will still unconquered. And the highest pinnacle of grandeur was attained, when an uncreated One, as Mediator, bowing before God over all, exclaimed, "Lo, I come ; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart,"

VII.

WRESTLING WITH GOD.

IN his narrative of events Luke does not always follow the exact order of time ; but at the point where we now are he inserts a paragraph which may be regarded as occupying its proper place, and which contains information communicated by him alone. The paragraph is Luke 22 : 43, 44 : "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." By some this paragraph is looked on as spurious (1), but this opinion is not well supported. Others find difficulty in a literal interpretation of the narrative. The appearance of the angel, and the "sweat as it were great drops of blood fall-

ing down to the ground," they would consign to the imagination of the witnesses, or the region of poetry. If, however, the appearance of angels on any occasion is granted ; if, for instance, the angels who came and ministered to Jesus after the temptation in the wilderness were real, there ought to be no difficulty in the appearance of an angel now. The testimony as to the bloody sweat is the same as that with respect to other points in the narrative which have not been questioned.

As if to compensate for the silence of all the historians, with the exception of Luke, on the events before us, the writer to the Hebrews supplies what may be termed an additional Gospel bearing on them. Heb. 5 : 7, 8 : "Who (Christ) in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." It is on all hands agreed that in this passage

there is reference to the agony in Gethsemane. If, then, we put the two paragraphs together we shall find them supplementing, confirming, and explaining each other.

(1) *The subject of Jesus's prayer.* The writer to the Hebrews furnishes an important statement regarding it. He speaks of Jesus praying "unto him that was able to save him from death." Deliverance from death was evidently prayed for. From what death? As He prayed that the cup might pass from Him, the death referred to must have been *the contents of the cup*. But there is another view of death which cannot be overlooked. Only a few minutes before, Jesus had said to the apostles that His "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"—even unto the threatened immediate rending of his human frame. Had such death taken place, the accomplishment of His work, according to the Father's plan, would have been impossible. He would have been the victim of death. From this premature death, then, He had also prayed to be saved,

If this is correct, the character of Jesus shines with a peculiar lustre. He was ready to lay down His life according to the commandment of the Father ; but He would do it at the Father's time, and in the Father's way. He would lay it down, when, with respect to all His Father's will and purposes, He could say, "It is finished." Till then, He would live, bearing any amount of suffering. How noble an example He sets before us ! If willing to live, we should be willing to die ; if willing to die, we should be willing to live, till God's time is come and our work is done. It was the saying of a good man on his deathbed, after a long life of usefulness, "I am waiting God's leave to die." Wonderfully well poised was Paul's mind, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better ; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

(2) *The manner of Jesus's prayer.* It comes out strikingly in both narratives. According to Luke, "being in an agony, he prayed more

earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." He had been praying earnestly before ; His agony is now deepened, and the earnestness increased. Emotion rises to the highest pitch, and so acts on the body that His sweat is as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. It is not easy to determine exactly what this means. Are we to understand merely that the sweat dropped like clots of blood falling to the ground ? Or are we to understand that the sweat itself was bloody ? Probably the latter view is correct. On the supposition that there was a mixture of blood, there may appear to be little occasion for saying, "as it were" (2). But, on the other hand, if there was no mixture, it seems strange that blood should have been mentioned at all. Besides, sweat coloured with blood is perfectly conceivable in the circumstances, and is capable of being defended by medical evidence. If the distance between Jesus and the apostles prevented them from seeing the thing

at the time, traces of blood might be left, sufficient for the establishment of the point. Take, now, the writer to the Hebrews. According to him, Jesus's prayers and supplications were accompanied with "strong crying and tears." But for this passage we should not have known that loud cries escaped His lips, and bitter tears rolled down His cheeks. As far as our information goes, this is more than took place at Calvary. The loud cries were there, but there is no word of tears. When we put both passages together, we have a picture of intensity in prayer, as deep as it is possible to conceive. Surely this was wrestling with God !

The great Intercessor is our example. Like Him, when we pray we should pray *fervently*. At the throne earnestness is indispensable. Without it prayer is meaningless. For what is prayer but direct intercourse with God, who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth ? He is constantly reminding us of that. "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with

the whole heart" (Psa. 119: 2). In another place, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication" (Eph. 6: 18).

It may be asked if Christ is our example, are we to make His intensity in prayer on this occasion our model? Are we to reproach ourselves, in proportion as we fall short of it? Some good people torment themselves on that score. However earnest in prayer they may be on any occasion, they rise from their knees, writing bitter things against themselves, on account of lack of sufficient fervour. It may help such to remember that, in Gethsemane, Christ was bearing the load of a world's sorrows and sins. *We* cannot be in His circumstances. Is there not often in the minds of those referred to, an underlying belief, unknown to themselves, that, in some way or other, fervour in prayer is part of the price of salvation, and that the fervour must rise to a certain degree ere the price can be paid? Nothing could be more

erroneous. In immediate connection with the account of the strong crying and tears, the writer to the Hebrews adds, "Being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." His were the strong crying and tears; His the agony; His the bloody sweat. Through these He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, that their earnestness, instead of being any part of the price of salvation, might be only the outgoings of a contrite and grateful heart; deeper earnestness in reality than it would be if produced under a spirit of bargain and bondage.

There is another thing to be remembered. We must not judge of intensity in prayer merely by the *mode* of its outward expression. All people are not cast in the same mould, and Christianity does not propose to run them into it. Some people express deep emotion in one way, and some in another. When labouring under it, some groan and weep. In others the bosom seems tranquil, and the eye is un-

dimmed by tears ; but only because the sorrow is too deep for such expression. It is so in prayer. There may be strong crying and tears, or the Holy Spirit may make intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and tears which cannot be shed.

“ Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed ;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.

“ Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear ;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

At the same time, if we have Jesus’s spirit in prayer, though the precise form of earnestness may vary, it will be strange if, now and then at least, there are not strong crying and tears, or what, according to our temperament, is equivalent to them.

(3) *The answer to Jesus’s prayer.*

According to the writer to the Hebrews, “ He was heard in that he feared.” The words “ in that he feared ” are understood by some

as meaning "on account of his reverence." The Revised Version has rendered them, "having been heard for his godly fear." His godly fear is assigned as a reason for His prayer having been heard. This would harmonise with what is stated in the verse that follows: "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." By the words "in that he feared" others understand a reference to the death which He dreaded, and from which He prayed to be saved. According to either interpretation, the fact remains that Jesus's prayer was heard.

It is remarkable that in connection with the different prayers of Jesus which were born amid the great travail of his soul, we are carefully informed that they were *heard* and *answered*. When He was standing by the grave of Lazarus, He lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always." At another time when He was troubled in soul He uttered the

words, "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." And so on the present occasion. And how speedily the answers came; as if the Father felt that such bitterness of woe could not be too soon sweetened with the joy, which instant communication from Him would not fail to inspire! There was another reason for answers coming so swiftly as they did. His outward circumstances and mental condition alike prepared Jesus for them. He had suffered; and He had learned obedience by the things which He suffered. How often answers to our prayers must be detained till the necessary preparedness is reached! We have it in our power either to delay or hasten answers. It was a broad principle which Jesus enunciated when He said, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."

Had the strong crying and tears any influence with God in connection with the answer to Jesus's prayer? It is impossible not to think so, when we read the words: "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Apart from influence thus exerted on God, these cryings and tears lose their force and meaning. The teaching of Jesus during His whole ministry was intended to show the influence of importunate prayer. Instinct acknowledges that influence. Nature as well as grace cries, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry: hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were." And this is our heavenly Father's heart: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

It may be said, "If importunity has influence with God, what becomes of the operation of His fixed laws?" It might well be asked in reply, "If importunity has not influence with God, what becomes of the operation of His fixed laws?" No law is more fixed than this: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Take, then, the case of children making some urgent request. Importunity on their part exercises influence on the father; does it, whether he grant the request or not. If he judges it right to grant it, their importunity weighs with him as a motive. If, in the exercise of wisdom, he refuses the request, the importunity may still exert influence. It may exert influence on his mind, if not in the way of changing, in the way of confirming it; and it will exert influence on his heart in the way of drawing it tenderly to the children, who thereby may be drawn into cheerful acquiescence in his will. If, then, the law of God's nature is mirrored in a father's bosom, that law is not made void,

but established, when importunity in prayer prevails with God. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!"

What was the precise answer to Jesus's prayer? Luke tells us, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him." As that statement precedes the assertion, "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly," one might suppose that the appearance of the angel was the cause of the earnestness. That, however, does not necessarily follow. The appearance of the angel was more likely the effect. Jesus had prayed that the cup might pass from Him. The cup did pass from Him, in that He was so strengthened that He drained it without a murmur. He had prayed to be saved from death. He was saved from it in that, with His strength renewed, He so met it that He became the Death of death, and triumphed over it; God raised Him up and "loosed the

pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." And with respect to death as the threatened immediate rending of His human frame, He was saved from it, when, through the strength imparted, He did not encounter it, till, with all His work and all His Father's will and purposes accomplished, He could surrender His victorious spirit into His Father's hands. God did not suffer Him to be tempted above that He was able, but with the temptation made a way to escape that He might be able to bear it.

But why should an angel appear to strengthen Him? As the Son of God, was He not lying in the bosom of the Almighty Father? As the Son of man, had He not a conscience which, from its unsullied purity, was itself a tower of strength? Had He not three loyal human hearts at the distance of a stone-cast, and others but a little way off? He had all that. And yet it was fitting that the angelic hosts should be represented in ministrations to their Lord. One solitary angel appears, not

twelve legions. One angel is enough. He is able for the service that is needed. What the precise service was we do not know. Possibly he might be the bearer of messages from the Majesty on high. His adoration of Jesus at such a moment would itself be a fountain of strength,

How strange the interlacings of ministrations in the universe are ! Every creature, every thing is pressed into the great service. God gives light, but He does it by commanding the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night. God sends fragrance, but He does it by bidding the flowers that enamel the earth breathe it out upon us. God strengthens His Son, but He does it by ministering angels. God strengthens us with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; but He may employ the same ministry. He may do this, even when He makes use of human instrumentality. Golden wings are not essential for angels. There are angels celestial and angels terrestrial. An angel is a loyal messenger of God, in whatever form. Titus, whom

God sent to comfort Paul, was as really an angel as the celestial visitant who appeared to him when he was tossed up and down in Adria. Our eyes are too weak, in the meantime, to bear the flashing glory of heavenly messengers. And yet they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want !
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant !
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant."

A still higher honour may be ours than that of having angels ministering to us. We are invited to become associated with them in ministering to our common Lord. A mysterious curtain, indeed, hides them from our view. We occupy different spheres. At present, we are a little lower than they ; in prospect, we stand nearer the throne. Meanwhile the same work demands our energies. The same hope should

fill our bosoms, for the same triumph is before us—the placing on Jesus's head the many crowns. As angels inspire us with joy, let us inspire them. It is within our reach. "Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The more it is made known, the more that sinners repent, and the more that saints shine in the beauty of the Lord, the deeper will be the angels' joy, and the louder will be their song.

VIII.

SLEEPING WATCHMEN.

How long Jesus continued in prayer we are not informed. The expression which He afterwards made use of, "one hour," does not determine the precise time. Immediately after prayer He goes to the three apostles. He finds them asleep. At first sight it does not seem very easy to account for this. Some, looking at the repetition of the sleep, are inclined to ascribe it partly to Satanic influence. Luke (22 : 45) helps us over the difficulty by explaining that sorrow was the cause. Intense emotion of any kind, in certain circumstances, might produce it. On the Mount of Transfiguration the same three apostles were oppressed with sleep, though the cause must have been the opposite of sorrow.

Jesus first addresses Peter. "Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?" (Mark 14: 37.) It is easy to understand why Peter should be singled out. He had been foremost and loudest in the expression of a determination to stand by the Master at all hazards. If Peter will be the first to speak, he must be willing to be the first called to account when necessity requires. As, however, all the apostles had expressed the same determination, Jesus includes the other two and says (Matt. 26: 40), "What! (ὅπως; "What! so far gone!") could ye not watch with me one hour?" "Why sleep ye?"

He seems for the moment astonished. As an element of human nature, surprise more than once showed itself in Him. At one time He appears marvelling at the amount, at another time at the lack, of faith which men displayed. On this occasion the sudden collapse of bravery, so honestly and strongly asserted, might strike Him as strange. But the wonder would be passing. He knew well the tension of mind

which for a long period the sleepers had been suffering.

It is impossible not to see a certain amount of reproof underlying His words. With all His sympathy He lets the apostles understand that watching with Him was not impossible nor unreasonable. But reproof is very gently expressed. Nothing could be farther from His mind than anger or petulance. His heart is overflowing with compassion, and His words breathe only love. In men, especially of a certain temperament, a large amount of self-control is necessary, if they would pass from the hurry of business to the petty vexations of even the best regulated homes, in undisturbed serenity of mind and unbroken tenderness of word and action. Here was the Son of man, if straight from the footstool of God's throne, straight also from the place of dragons, going in vain in quest of loved ones on whose bosom He hoped for a moment to lay His weary head, and yet filled with the peace which passeth understanding.

Jesus proceeds, "Rise," "Watch and pray that

ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41). Before leaving them He had said, "Watch with me." Were we to be guided by the order observed in Luke's narrative, we should gather that He had also already said, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." It is quite possible that He had done so. The repetition of the words along with the injunction to watch would show the stress He laid on the matter (1).

In order to understand the counsel He was giving, it is necessary to have a distinct impression of the "temptation" to which He was referring. It was not temptation in general; He had evidently a particular one in view. Little more than an hour before, He had said to the apostles, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." All along His life He had been beset by temptations. On Him as Commander the eyes of the Tempter and his hosts had been continually fastened. But the officers as well as the Commander stood within the same circle of Satanic influence, and therefore the temptations were common to them all.

In this, the last onset, such was peculiarly the case. Satan was making a combined assault on Jesus, and he was carrying on the assault through the apostles. Jesus was now giving them warning. This was the "temptation" which they must be careful not to enter.

"*Enter*" is emphatic. If they should come to find themselves in the heart of temptation, on them must lie the blame of entering into it. They were now close at the door. Let them beware of going in. But had they not already done it? There can be no doubt that anxiety on Jesus's part regarding this largely accounts for His present visit. While He felt drawn to them; in order that, even for a few moments, He might cool His burning brow in the refreshing waters of human affection, His agonising sympathy with them in their temptation would not let Him rest. Like the fond mother who, during the sickness of her child in an adjoining room, even throughout the night cannot stay away, but every now and then must rise and visit him, Jesus seizes the opportunity of going

and seeing how it fared with the apostles. With His surprise at finding them asleep there must have mingled the sorrow of disappointment. The Tempter had evidently managed already to gain some advantage. Defeat was more threatening than it had been an hour ago. But with all that there was still room for action, and a possibility of retrieving loss. Forewarned of danger, they ought to be armed against it. Their present position formed a crisis, at which every step was loss or gain; and the very first movement might be defeat or victory.

There is no change in the tactics of the Commander. His order still is, "*Watch.*" Keep awake in body, soul, and spirit. Be constantly on the outlook. The Tempter would be doing that. If they slept, if they were not vigilant, he would have an opportunity of spreading his nets, and their feet would be taken unawares. They were not, however, only to watch; they were to "*watch and pray.*" He went to pray for them and for Himself. They were to pray, but He did not ask them to pray for Him. So

far as we know, He had never done that. A strange thing, surely, if He and they were in all respects only brethren! They were to pray for themselves, and for one another. "*Watch and pray.*" Both were necessary. If they did not watch, they could not pray; if they did not pray, they could not watch. Let them do both. Supplies would come from the throne of grace, so that they would be able to "stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Was it not, however, on a very small pivot that the most important issues were made to turn, when so much was suspended on the successful effort of a few weary men to keep themselves at midnight awake and prayerful? Ill had it been for the world if victory, in this great conflict with Satan, had depended on that. Such was not the case. Victory turned not on the watchfulness and prayers of these men, but on the watchfulness and prayers of their Commander. At the same time it was intensely important, especially for themselves, that the apostles should stand firm and fast. In ordinary

life, how often a crisis arises in a person's affairs, when, notwithstanding Divine control of all events, he is made to feel that the whole direction of his future history turns on his making or not making a supreme effort for self-extrication! Such a crisis had now come to the apostles. Their great Master held their destiny in His hands ; but they must work out their own salvation.

IX.

TIME TO AWAKE.

IN the great conflict with the powers of darkness, in which all of us are engaged, the secret of victory lies concealed in the triumph which the Captain of salvation won in the garden of Gethsemane. But under Him we must fight and conquer. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

The weapons to be used in the conflict are those of Gethsemane, "*watchfulness and prayer*." The orders of the Leader still are: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." It is worthy of notice how often both words, "*watch and pray*," had been on Jesus's lips during His ministry. The ideas which they expressed must

have lain near His heart. For instance, He says in one place, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." In another place He says, "Watch ye therefore," and adds, "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." With respect to "*prayer*," He is constantly reminding us of its necessity. But not only does He speak separately of "watching and praying," but, as in Gethsemane, He combines the two. In one place He says, "Take ye heed, watch and pray." In another place, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always." The favourite idea of the Master stuck to the disciples. The words which Peter heard in the garden are echoed in his writings. "The end of all things," he says, "is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." "Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer," R. V. (1 Peter 4: 7). The expression, "*unto prayer*," or "*prayers*," means "with the view of promoting prayer." That, too, is a striking sentence: "Be sober, be vigilant." "Be sober, be watchful," R. V. (1 Peter 5: 8).

84 *The Garden of Gethsemane.*

Why? For the same reason as that which held in Gethsemane, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith." Paul evidently delights in the same idea: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Coloss. 4: 2).

What is the Christian duty of watching? Has it anything to do with *wakefulness* as in the case of the apostles? No doubt of it. There are few more precious boons than sleep, that mighty, silent tide, which rises every twenty-four hours on the weary world, and for the time buries it in happy oblivion. And yet, in excess, this boon is fraught with evil. It was a wise man who said, "Love not sleep lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread." What opportunities, what health, what fortunes, what time have been lost through this one cause—excess in slumbers! The kindest counsel that could be given to many, especially many a

young person, would be "Watch" (in the way of wakefulness), "lest ye enter into temptation."

Let us take a common case. With most, the time for devotions is morning and evening; the period in either case bordering on sleep. Whether we mean it or not, these devotions largely determine the tone and colour of life day by day. They tell insensibly on every duty. But how strong the temptation often is to over-indulgence in slumber! A wearied frame, a jaded spirit may seem to demand it; but in reality, the sweetness of sleep itself seduces us.

If the temptation is yielded to, what is the consequence in the long run? At first, devotions languish and are ready to die. Conscience rebels; we are uneasy, and try to recover ourselves. But we yield again and again, till conscience gradually ceases to speak out. We are not happy; we feel that we have lost the ground we once occupied; but in time, *if we conquer not*, we settle down; at best, content to take our place among those who desire

to lead a virtuous life, but who make no claim to Christian character. This is the sad history of many a youth. He makes shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience through neglect of Jesus's counsel: "Watch," "Wake." There is more wisdom than appears in the resolution of the Psalmist: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

The example of Jesus may well make us blush. On one occasion, after a day of toil, at sunset crowds gathered round the door of the house where He was staying, and He went on healing them. Surely now He must rest! "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." This was indeed watching unto prayer!

But "watching," as a Christian duty, covers a greater space than mere "wakefulness." A person may be waking, and yet not watching. Christian watching includes *vigilance with respect*

to the whole man. Be on the alert; keep an outlook along the entire line, that at no point the Tempter may get advantage over you. Have an eye on bodily appetites, lest they betray you into excess. Keep a rein on the imagination, lest you run riot in the chambers of imagery. Guard self-love, lest it intrude into the domain of supreme love for God, and grudge your neighbour his proper share. Perhaps you may feel as if such constant self-supervision were inconsistent with youthful elasticity and manly freedom; inexpedient, if not impracticable. Patients who are under medical treatment must not wonder if restraints, at other times unnecessary, are laid upon them. In this world, Christians at the best are but slowly recovering from a deadly malady, and must not complain if the strictest self-regulation is enjoined. No man, however, was more a man than Jesus. None can have sympathy with human nature, with the young, such as He has. Through the process of watching which He requires, our whole being—body, soul, and spirit—

attains its highest development ; we grow into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ; and we are in the best possible condition for accomplishing the work of life.

Of course, at particular times, there will be necessity for keener watching than at others. But at no time can we afford to be off our guard. It would almost seem as if the great Tempter's eyes were ever on us, and as if the moment he detected us not watching he spread a snare for our entanglement. No doubt if we knew when he would act, we would watch. "If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." The thief took good care not to tell him. Nor does the Tempter tell us. But Israel's keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, does. He tells us that it is when we are off our guard. It was in an unguarded moment that Noah drank wine to excess ; but what that moment cost him ! It was in an

unguarded moment that Moses spoke unadvisedly with his lips; but what that moment cost him! It was in an unguarded moment that Peter denied his Master; but what that moment cost him! It is in an unguarded moment that a person makes the sharp retort, does the ungenerous deed, utters the unbecoming word, is guilty of a piece of folly, exceeds the bounds of moderation; but how often that moment swells into hours, or days, or months, or years of bitter and unavailing sorrow!

If watching is a Christian duty, so is *praying*. We must "watch and pray." It is impossible to mistake the meaning of that latter word "pray;" it has only one sense for the apostles and for us. And the two things, *watching* and *praying*, must go together. They are complements of each other. If we would watch well, we must pray. So difficult is it to watch aright that we cannot do it alone; we need companionship. The sleepless Watcher is willing to give His company; for His words still are: "Watch *with me*." That company we secure

through prayer. The power of watching will in this way be immensely increased. The eyes of the Watcher of Israel run to and fro throughout all the earth, and detect the best laid nets and the finest meshes of temptation. *He watches well who watches with Jesus's eyes and his own at the same time. Pray, then, unto watching.* But if it is true that, in order to watch well we must pray, it is no less true that, in order to pray well, we must watch. Self-indulgence in any form blunts the spirit's edge and dulls its tones in prayer. Self-restraint sharpens its edge and quickens its tones in communing with God. *Watch, then, unto prayer.* "These," says Foster, "must be combined; for watching without prayer were but an impious homage to ourselves. Prayer without watching were but an impious and also absurd homage to God."

Christian watchfulness and prayer are *means to an end*. "Watch and pray, *that ye enter not into temptation.*" There is deep meaning to us in the word "enter," One may find himself in

the midst of temptation through a variety of reasons. He may fall into it, and so fall that he is entitled to the comforting assurance of the apostle: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Or he may be allured into it. When that is the case, let him not say that he is tempted of God ; for God tempts no man. Let him lay the blame on himself, for "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." But of what folly is that man guilty who with open eyes walks into temptation ! He joins hands with the great Tempter. The inmost sin may have an outer door through which we pass to it. The battle to be won must be fought at the door. "Watch and pray, in order that ye may not *enter* into temptation." Say not in your heart, "What harm can there be in doing this or that ?" Perhaps none ; but look where the thing which you propose to do will likely lead. You say, "Should it lead me near to what is wrong, I can retreat." How do you know ? Your power and inclination to retreat shall have become weakened,

You reply, "Even though I should find myself in the heart of temptation, I might watch and pray." Not as Jesus means ; for you have already done the thing, to prevent which He gave you these precautions. Expose not your principles, however fixed, to a strain when there is no occasion ; they may give way under it. Employ not reason in demonstrating to conscience the fallacy of its sound though silent warnings. Young man, let no friend tamper with your convictions of right and wrong. They are the hedges which your heavenly Father has taken years of training to set around your unsuspecting spirit ; ill shall it be with you if you allow sneers or flattery or threats to break them down.

Not to "enter into temptation" is itself success. It is an earnest of final victory over the Tempter ; but not till the end can watching and praying at the door of temptation be any day dispensed with. "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood ;" every battle, except this,

the deadliest of all. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." You have to fight against a foe whom you can neither see, nor hear, nor touch. Often you can know that you have lost ground, only through the consciousness that you have not been watching and praying; and often you can know that ground has been gained, only through the consciousness that watching and praying have not been wanting. But perseverance in these to the end will win the day. It will crown the Captain of salvation with glory, and make you sharers in the spoils of victory: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

X.

UNEQUALLY YOKED.

THE gentle remonstrance of Jesus with His apostles is over. He has given them counsel regarding watching and praying. One other word He speaks ere He leaves them : "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26 : 41). About the meaning of these terms there can be little difficulty. "*Spirit*" embraces man's higher nature, and "*flesh*" his lower, whether viewed with respect to body or soul. (1 Thess. 5 : 23.)

The statement, as uttered by Him who "was made flesh," might be so far a reflection of His own consciousness. Only a few minutes before, He had given an illustration of its truth when he prayed : "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." The willing

spirit and the weak flesh are compatible with a sinless nature (2 Cor. 13 : 4). It is only of such a nature that the words, in their fullest meaning, are true—"the spirit indeed is willing;" and it is only to such a nature that the expression, in its purest sense, can be applied—"the flesh is weak."

In the case of fallen man the sentiment finds fresh and sad illustration. Not till he is renewed by the Holy Spirit is he in possession of "spirit" in the highest sense. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And then, where the Divine regenerating hand has communicated a spiritual nature, there always remains more than enough of infirmity and sin to make the gap between the willing spirit and the weak flesh broad and deep. What Christian, however lofty the tone of his spirituality may be, does not habitually sympathise with Paul: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not"? In the best of men performance is far behind purpose. If a Christian really did all

that his spiritual nature prompted him to do, he would be a very different man from what he is. But how often it is true of him—

“ The native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought ;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action ! ”

The greatness of the gap between what Paul's spirit willed, and what Paul's flesh permitted him to do, made him exclaim, “ O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ”

It must have been with a heart full of the milk of human kindness that Jesus dropped the sentiment before us into the apostles' weary hearts. His object was not to excuse their conduct, as if He had come to regard His injunction to watch with Him impossible or unreasonable. Had he done so; He would not have repeated the injunction. Nor could He mean them to suppose that neglect of any of His wishes was a matter of little importance. But He was

speaking as our High Priest, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Knowing the discouragement which consciousness of neglect of duty would produce in the apostles, He was anxious to comfort them. Without winking at their faults, He was making the most of their virtues. Over the infirmity of the flesh He throws the mantle of charity by a forward and generous assertion of the willingness of the spirit. He never breaks a bruised reed, nor quenches smoking flax. If among the ruins of human character He sees even one shining particle of honest worth, He rejoices over it.

This utterance of Jesus is often wrested to a wrong purpose. People encourage themselves and others in errors and follies and sins, and defend their conduct on the ground that "the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak." It were well for such to remember to what the weak flesh yielded on the occasion before us. It was sleep—the most natural, necessary, and

innocent of all enjoyments—sleep after long weary hours of agony. And it were well to remember, too, that when the weak flesh yielded, the spirit was willing, anxious to obey the injunction of Jesus. How often it is all the other way! We are tempted because the flesh is willing and the spirit is weak. We are wishing to indulge the flesh; we consent to its indulgence, and then defend it by perverting the gracious words of Jesus. In such circumstances His word is not, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It is rather, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Let us take care not to make Christ the minister of sin.

Guarding against this, let us have our minds charged with the charity of Jesus. What a contrast there is between Him and those who indulge in indiscriminate and unsparing denunciations of the faults and transgressions of their neighbour! In their eye there is very little difference between wrong wilfully and recklessly done and wrong committed under extenuating circumstances. To them it is

nearly all the same, whether it has been done by a thoughtless child or a wilful man. They make little account of different temperaments, different temptations, different bodily conditions. With victories achieved by their neighbour in his heart they can have no sympathy, for they are ignorant of them. Of his manifest attainments they are impatient, and, as far as possible, remain blind to them. His single blunder or infirmity covers the multitude of his virtues, and buries them out of sight. The charity of Jesus is that which is painted by Paul in his world-renowned picture. Surely, on the occasion before us, His was the charity which "suffereth long, and is kind ; that envieth not ; that vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Such charity on our part will, more than anything else, unconsciously draw our neighbour out of his blunders

and infirmities, and help to make him what we profess to be anxious he should be. And, it will be the best thing to open our eyes to our own unsuspected blunders and infirmities, and to charm us out of their deformity into the beauty of unspotted character.

Is there no way of filling up the deep, broad gap between the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh? Is there no way of having the spirit and the flesh true and equal yoke-fellows? Christianity proposes to make them so; Christianity is doing it for all that obey the gospel. It is true that not in this world will the gap completely disappear, but it will ere long. Ere long that which is perfect shall be come, and that which is in part shall be done away. Every step which the follower of Christ takes in the Divine life is carrying him nearer and nearer the consummation of perfect manhood. And what is advancing age but steady progress to that point in his history, at which the body passes down into the silent laboratory of the great Refiner, where, curiously wrought in

the lower parts of the earth, it is prepared for being fashioned into a body of glory? When this body shall be taken possession of, then shall the perfect man appear. He shall then be able to say, "To will is present with me ; and how to perform that which is good I find." Will shall be balanced by power, and power shall be balanced by will, and both together shall work to the glory of the only Potentate.

A prospect so splendid completely alters the complexion of this present life. He, before whom it lies, would, in the words of an eloquent writer, "accept no substitute consolation against the gloomy character of this mortal life ; not the highest health, not the most exuberant spirits, nor early youth itself, if it were possible for that to be renewed. No, rather let me fade ; let me languish ; let me feel that mortality is upon me, and that the terrestrial scene is darkening around me ; but with this inspiration of faith and hope, this rising energy, which is already carrying me out of an existence, which is all frailty, into one of vigour and power and perpetuity."

XI.

STEADFASTLY SETTING HIS FACE.

FOR the second time Jesus has left the apostles, and retired to commune with His Father. In prayer, according to Mark (14 : 39), He "spake the same words" as He had previously done. When, however, we turn to Matthew (26 : 42), who gives the precise words which Jesus used, we find that, though they were substantially the same, there was an important difference. Previously He had said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Now the prayer is, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (1). In one thing the prayers exactly correspond — the outpouring of filial affection, "O my Father." Instead, however, of any longer

speaking of the possibility of the cup passing from Him, He assumes the opposite. He speaks as if all doubt regarding the Father's will had vanished. And now He is at rest; He has passed out of the billows into calm water. The sunshine of victory is breaking over His heart while He says, "Thy will be done" (2).

It is not difficult to account for the change. Possibly the lapse of time, however short, has had some effect. The soul, for the moment overborne by the whirlwind of woe, is already rallying its powers, and girding itself afresh for conflict. No doubt, too, the very exercise of wrestling with God, through which He has passed, is easing the burden. And, what seems strange, the state in which He had found the apostles when He visited them, while in one aspect disappointing, would tend to rouse His whole being. Their failure to act on His counsel could only make it clear that He must drain the cup, and would fire His soul for wresting from Satan the advantage which he had won. But there was more than this to

account for the altered form of His prayer. His supplications had been heard. Through the strengthening angel He felt in Himself that He had been saved from death. All fear of that immediate rending of soul and body, which would have prevented the accomplishment of His work, had passed away ; and the death which, according to the Father's plan, lay between Him and the winning of the world's salvation, He was now consciously able to face. " If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

Let those Christians take comfort who, honestly desiring to acquiesce in the will of their heavenly Father, yet feel at first as if nothing but the removal of some cup of bitterness could possibly restore peace and joy to them. How often a good man, when first surprised with the intelligence that he was labouring under a disease which would ere long terminate in death, has felt uprisings of rebellion in his heart, as if nothing else could satisfy him but a reversal of the will of God ! The only prayer

he could present was, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and he could scarcely add, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." And yet when a longer or shorter time elapses the scattered powers begin to rally. The pouring out of the heart to God in prayer, overcharged though that heart may be with rebellious thoughts, is some relief. For, strange as it may seem, we are often more ready to accept God's will, however unwelcome, after we have told Him in prayer how insupportable it feels. Then comes the pressure which the consciousness of *necessity* exerts. The man feels that he *must* accept the will of God, and the feeling helps him to do it. All human aid is vain. Quarters from which he might have expected relief, from which it would gladly come, were it possible, he is made painfully aware can afford none. He is forced nearer his Father in heaven: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my

refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry ; for I am brought very low." But there is more. As in Jesus's case, the person's prayers are heard and answered. With all the mixture of rebellious thoughts, his groans and tears and cries, for Christ's sake, find lodgment in the bosom of God ; and, whether by an angel from heaven or an angel on earth, or without an angel at all, through the Holy Ghost the Comforter, God sends deliverance. He fulfils His promise : " When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

Sent by God through such a process, the man gradually, it may be speedily, attains to the prayer : " O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Of course these words could be uttered in a spirit of rebellion. Many, no doubt, make

use of them in such a spirit, when placed in circumstances of great trial, from which there is no escape. They see the inevitable, and almost challenge God to do His worst. Men on board a vessel, when unexpectedly told that it was sinking, have cursed God to His face. Even men of a very different stamp, when unexpectedly informed of the approach of death, and while saying, "Thy will be done," sometimes wrap themselves up in stern resolution to meet their inevitable fate, thinking all the time how easily God might have prevented it, and how well it would have been had He done so. Jesus's followers learn otherwise. To them, cold, dark necessity becomes clothed with the most attractive attributes of God—His light and love. It is no more to mere abstract necessity that they bend; it is to the sacred necessity of carrying out the gracious, though it may be the mysterious, will of a Father in heaven. It is not simply, "I must;" it is, "I must, and I will." It is not simply, "I will because I must;" it is, "I must, because my

heavenly Father wills, and I will along with Him." Loyalty triumphs over necessity. In the Biography of the late Principal Cunningham, of Edinburgh, it is stated that, when dying, he was at first somewhat taken aback by the unexpectedness of death's approach, and expressed a desire that, had it been God's will, he had had "more time to contemplate death." In saying this to his physician, he added, "But God by a single glance can do this for me." The physician replied, "And He will do it, Dr. Cunningham." To which Dr. Cunningham answered, "He has done it."

A second visit is paid by Jesus to the apostles. He finds them asleep as before. There is no record of what passed between them. It is, however, manifest that some conversation took place, for Mark informs us that "they wist not what to answer him." Their inability to give any satisfactory explanation may be accepted as a proof of the reasonableness of Jesus's request that they should watch with Him. A third time He leaves them, and

resumes communion with His Father. Matthew informs us that in prayer Jesus made use of "the same words" as before. Once more He returns to the apostles. It is not said that He found them asleep; but whether He did so or not, He said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest" (Matt. 26: 45).

These words are very generally regarded as expressing blame, and in the form of irony (3). But surely there is a happier sense in which they should be understood. The greater the triumph we assign to Jesus in this temptation, the more difficulty we find in supposing Him now addressing the apostles in such a spirit. If He found them asleep, is it not possible to imagine Him saying, even before they awoke, "Sleep on now, and take your rest," in the same compassionate tones as those which a fond mother might use toward a weary, sleeping child who, though requested, had failed to keep himself awake? And if He did not find them asleep, or if they awoke when He first addressed them, might He not still use the words in pity

and love? True, they had failed where they ought to have succeeded; He had lost their sympathy, and they had lost their opportunity. But why think of that now? The spirit had been willing, though the flesh had been weak. The time for watching and praying was past. They certainly needed rest; if it were possible, they might take it now.

It was not to be. At this point Jesus's attention is arrested by some sight or sound in the distance. He feels that the crisis has arrived. "It is enough," He cries, "the hour is come; behold the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14: 41). (4) The sights and sounds come nearer and nearer. Through the olive-trees Jesus sees the red glare of torches and lanterns, and the flashing gleam of swords. A band of armed men is approaching. "Rise," He cries, "let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." As these words rang in the apostles' ears, how conscious they must have been of the wisdom of their Master in asking them to

watch and pray, and of their loss in not stirring themselves up sufficiently to comply! With such courage as they could muster, and such weapons as they could snatch, in the weakness which self-reproach engenders, they must at a moment's notice confront the enemy. How difficult in these circumstances it would be to conquer! And yet they still had Jesus as Commander.

XII.

THE TRAITOR.

WHEN a painter has expended the most brilliant colours on some fair form portrayed on his canvas, he may still have it in his power to add to the effect by introducing some figure in striking contrast to the bright creation of his pencil. He, whom the sacred historians so wondrously depict as "the altogether lovely," has His beauty heightened through their setting beside Him a figure in dismal contrast to His perfection.

One of the twelve apostles bore the name of Judas Iscariot. In those days Judas was a common name, and belonged to two of the apostles. The name Iscariot was added in order to distinguish the man who bore it. The unenviable notoriety which Judas Iscariot afterwards ac-

quired made that distinction desirable for the sake of his brother apostle. At the last passover this apostle put a question to Jesus: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14: 22). It is curious to notice how particular John is in stating that it was not Iscariot. It was not likely that Judas Iscariot would put such a question. Of his personal history we know scarcely anything. He was the son of Simon, but of what Simon we are ignorant. Different conjectures have been made regarding the name Iscariot. The most probable seems to be that Iscariot means a man of Kerioth, Judas's native town in Judah. He appears to have been the only man of Judæa in the apostolic band.

The first notice we have of him is in the list of twelve men selected as apostles. Each of the synoptical writers furnishes the list, places Judas Iscariot last, and adds, "who also betrayed him." Bad deeds have a tenacity of life which is very remarkable. Once done, they can never be undone. They may be repented of and for-

given—and how much that is!—but once done, as facts, they run on for ever. How miserable to drag through endless ages the chain, “who also betrayed him”!

We naturally wonder why Judas was chosen by Jesus as one of the apostles, especially when we are informed that “he knew from the beginning who should betray him.” It is difficult to give a full solution of the matter. A partial solution may be found by remembering that the knowledge of Judas’s future was confined to Jesus, and that Jesus would seek, by constant care and kindness, to subdue the lurking evil in Judas’s heart. After all, it is what we see in daily providence—a bad man occupying the place which a good man should fill. And the arrangement has answered important ends. There are few sorer trials in life than those which are experienced when a man’s foes are those of his own household. Through Judas being one of his apostles, Jesus knew that trial experimentally, and can sympathise with us under it. But besides, by his place in the apostolate, Judas has

become an important witness to the truth of Christianity. Had he been an apostle, and continued friendly to Jesus, his testimony might have been set aside as partial. Had he been an enemy of Jesus, but not an apostle, any testimony he bore must have wanted that minuteness which close companionship with Jesus alone could supply. As an apostle, and yet an enemy, an eye-witness of Jesus in the most secret and familiar intercourse, and at the same time an eye-witness keen in detecting faults, if any existed, the testimony which he utters: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," is of the highest moment. And that testimony, by an act of self-destruction, he sealed with his blood.

When the twelve were sent out by Jesus as evangelists, we find Judas among them. And, so far as we know, for about two years everything went on smoothly. He took no conspicuous part like some other of the apostles; but that he was a man possessed of certain useful qualities, we may infer from the fact that

he acted as treasurer of the apostolic band. All the time, however, the latent root of bitterness was springing up unchecked. An occasion which soon followed showed the strength which it had already acquired.

About a year before the close of His ministry, Jesus's sentiments on certain points had been so pronounced that there was a serious defection from the ranks of His disciples. "Many of them went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). On His putting the question to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter, as spokesman, gave the strongest assurance of loyalty. But though nothing is recorded, something must have happened which led Jesus to reply, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Even though we should not attach to the term "devil" its full sense, it was a strong expression, and could not escape the notice of the apostles (1). No one was named, but Judas Iscariot might well have suspicions that he was the man. If so, the reference was not likely to be soon forgotten or forgiven. The word which was designed to

arouse to the need of reformation would fall into his bosom only to feed its slow and silent fires. It is the case in everyday life. Kind words dropped into jaundiced minds may stick fast like poisoned arrows, and rankle there till an opportunity arrive for vengeance. Such an opportunity came to Judas.

For a considerable time the death of Jesus had been determined on. To various classes the spotless purity of His character had given great offence. His unsparing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees had provoked their anger; His influence with the humbler orders had roused the jealousy of the ecclesiastical authorities; and hints which had been occasionally dropped by Him had excited the suspicions of the civil government. The sooner, therefore, He could be got out of the way the better. A miracle which He had lately performed—the raising of Lazarus from the dead—helped to bring things to a point. On the back of it the Sanhedrim met, and came to a resolution to have Jesus put to death. In compassing

their ends they were to find a fitting and ready instrument in Judas.

It so happened that Jesus and His apostles had been invited to sup at the house of Simon the leper, in Bethany; Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, their once more living brother, being guests also (John 12 : 1). True to her character, Mary began to anoint the feet of Jesus. The ointment filled the house with fragrance and more than one heart with murmuring. The jealous treasurer became the spokesman. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" he rudely asked. "Let her alone," said Jesus: "against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." How richly deserved this rebuke was, we may infer from a note which John appends to his description of the scene. Here is the note: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." It does not matter very much what

interpretation is put on the word "bare" (2). We are distinctly informed that Judas had now become "a thief," so that while with his mouth he seemed a champion of the poor, with his hand he was actually pilfering the scanty stores of the poorest of men. The rebuke must have been keenly felt by Judas. All the worst passions of the unhappy man seem to have been now aroused.

Originally he must have entered the apostolate with ends in view which had been doomed to bitter disappointment. The Master he had consented to follow was not the Chief he had fancied; His cause was not that which with open eyes he would have espoused; and the rewards attached to service were not those for which in his heart he had bargained. The sun of Jesus of Nazareth, he felt, was rapidly setting. According to Himself the day of His burial was at hand. To turn his back upon Jesus and His cause could be attended with no loss, and was demanded by self-interest. But there was more than this; Judas felt that he had good cause for being offended. "Had not Jesus shown the most

marked favouritism ? Had He not looked with an evil eye upon him ? Had He not thrown out insinuations against his character ? Had He not in Simon's house put an affront upon him ? Was it any wonder there was a determination on the part of the authorities to get rid of Him ?" And Satan would add fuel to the flame by suggesting to the pilferer the substantial advantage in the way of money he might derive by contributing to that desirable end. We know from Luke (22 : 3) that Satan did make such a suggestion.

Could there be a more striking illustration of the rapidity with which, under certain conditions, a seed of evil may grow, and the dimensions which it may attain ? The more worth you assign to Judas in the outset of his career, the more distinctly will this appear. Never, surely, had any one so many barriers between him and destruction, so many chances of reforming what was wrong, and cultivating what was right ! And never, surely, did any one more determinately overleap the barriers, and cast

the chances to the winds! Any kindly feelings toward Jesus faded into indifference; indifference grew into grudge; and grudge culminated in Jesus's betrayal.

We see the same thing taking place continually. How many are attracted to Christ's service for a time who, when they come to find that it does not meet their expectations, first miscall it, then denounce it, and finally turn their backs on it for ever! Love, when it passes into hatred, is the bitterest hatred of all.

The die is cast. Judas goes straight to the authorities. "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" is his bold-looking demand (Matt. 26: 15). It must have been with feelings of no common satisfaction, not unmingled with surprise and contempt, that they listened to the proposal, and to the man who made it. But they would feel that the proposal was a most fortunate solution of their difficulties. And, to crown all, it was made by one of Jesus's closest followers. They would give him, they said, thirty pieces of silver. That sum was less than five pounds, and,

by the law of Moses, was the price of the life of a slave. It does not follow that this was all that Judas asked or expected. It was the sum which the authorities were willing to give ; and Judas must have felt that he had now no choice but to accept it. Unhappy man ! When the bargain was concluded, did not the worm that dieth not begin to gnaw, and the fire which is not quenched, to burn ? Jesus sold for thirty pieces of silver ! But the heart must now be steeled for the foul deed ; and there was one, at least, ready to help Judas to do it. How he went through what to him must have been the farce of the Paschal Supper, it is difficult to imagine ; but there he would get the information which would allow him to execute his diabolical purpose, and there he would hear words of love which would set his soul on fire of hell. Suddenly rising from the table, he hastens to the authorities, who instantly take steps for the apprehension of Jesus. It was an armed band from them that was now making its appearance at the Garden of Gethsemane.

XIII.

SELF-SURRENDER.

THE approach of the armed band reveals its size and composition. There are Roman soldiers with their tribune from the castle of Antonio ; part of the temple guard with their officers, and a multitude of retainers. And along with these are men who should have been ashamed to be there—some of the chief priests and elders. The band is supplied with swords and staves, and, in case of concealment or flight on the part of Jesus, with lanterns and torches.

But who is this that is acting as leader ? Judas Iscariot ! Is it possible ? Yes ; his acquaintance with the spot has made his services essential ; and to all appearance he scruples not to render them. But in whatever way *he* felt, the authorities surely might have spared him this

indignity. No wonder that all the synoptical writers point the leader out as "one of the twelve;" and that at the election of an apostle in his room, Peter should set the brand on his name, "guide to them that took Jesus." He was the last man in the world who should have consented to occupy the post. Better had it been for him to have laid his body across the path of Jesus's captors than be their guide. Judas himself must have felt the unspeakable shame of the position into which he had allowed Satan to drift him. When he ventured to look up, did not the moon seem to him turned into blood, and the stars in their courses appear to be fighting against him? Even Rénan says, "Such an excess of vileness is scarcely credible." It certainly tears from the unhappy man's shoulders the cloak which the charity of some would throw around him.

The armed band has arrived at the garden. The eleven apostles have instinctively crowded round their Master. In order to facilitate the arrest of Jesus, it had been agreed between

His captors and Judas that he should point out Jesus by going up to Him and saluting Him with a kiss. They should then at once seize hold of Him, and (the additional words are suggestive), "lead him away safely." The traitor must have been in the utmost impatience. Not a moment is lost. According to Mark, "As soon as he (Judas) was come, he goeth straight-way to him." And Matthew's expression corresponds : "And forthwith he came to Jesus" (1). The armed band appears to have remained at first in the background, while Judas hurries forward to Jesus (Matt. 26 : 49). He salutes Him, "Hail, master!" and kisses Him (2). The thing is not over when Jesus says, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" It were vain to attempt to convey in language the vileness of Judas's words and deed, or the loathsomeness which Jesus must have felt. The lightning which flashed through His calm reply and kingly bearing must have scathed and shrivelled the soul of the traitor. Note Jesus's words.

"Friend" (*Ἐταίρε*), the word is that used in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, when the king addresses the unwelcome guest—"Friend, how camest thou in hither?" not the word used by Jesus to His disciples, "Ye are my friends" (*Φίλοι*). "*Wherefore art thou come?*" (*ἐφ' ὃ πάρε;*) ("*Do that for which thou art come,*" R. V.) And then follows an appeal to the traitor's conscience, whose stifled up-braidings the Lord of conscience utters in the traitor's ears: "*Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*" Every word is scorching. And yet the balance of Jesus's mind is perfect. Neither pride, nor fear, nor contempt, nor revenge ruffles His soul. Though it is in the crucible of temptation, all is dignity, fortitude, justice, and compassion.

It may well be asked, How could Judas dare to venture on such mockery, and how could Jesus bear to submit to it at his hands? We can explain it only by supposing that by this time Judas was past shame, fear, and feeling, and that he had something like a diabolical

consciousness that it was now safe to heap indignity on Jesus. He was right ; the hour had come when Jesus was to be brought as a lamb to the slaughter ; and Judas, if he chose, might safely lead the way in inflicting those inhuman insults which would follow Jesus to the Cross.

Judas has acted his part. The promised signal has been given. Now is the time for the armed band to advance. Jesus anticipates them. "Through the eternal Spirit he offers himself without spot to God." His whole soul is glowing with the thought : "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." He comes forward, and with a voice they must all have heard, says, "Whom seek ye?" (John 18 : 4). Though voluntarily surrendering Himself, He will yet have it made manifest that He has not courted arrest, and that He, and He alone, is the party whom the armed band has been commissioned by the

authorities to apprehend. Immediately the answer is returned, "Jesus of Nazareth." As quickly Jesus replies, "I am he" (3). The words are not out of His mouth when a panic seizes those whom He had addressed. They retreat in confusion, and fall. There need not be great difficulty in accounting for this. The sudden appearance and unexpected self-surrender of Jesus must have filled them with amazement and awe. By a word He had disarmed them all, and turned swords and staves, lanterns and torches into foolishness. How could they hear that voice in the silence of the night, and gaze on that countenance so strangely lighted up, without feeling—"What manner of man is this?" Other men, placed in circumstances somewhat similar to those of the armed band, have displayed the same kind of feelings. History abounds in examples (4). To account for the panic many suppose that Jesus flashed a gleam of Divine glory on His captors. The thing is not unlikely. Surrendering Himself, Jesus might wish to make it manifest how

voluntary His surrender was, and how completely the captors were in the hands of the captive. In whatever way it came about, it was a strange spectacle for Roman soldiers to present. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob."

The confusion would not last long. Again addressing them, Jesus asks, "Whom seek ye?" The answer is as before, "Jesus of Nazareth." "I have told you," He replies, "that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." He gathers the apostles under His wings, and in the name of truth and justice demands protection for them. There they are, utterly defenceless but for Him. They had no reason to expect His protection. They had neglected His counsel. But He had not forgotten them, nor was He now to leave them. Only a few hours before He had in-

terceded with God in their behalf; in their behalf He now intercedes with men. Neither of the pleadings could be in vain. As John puts it: "The saying must be fulfilled which (in his intercession with God) he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." That intercession had embraced their present safety as well as their future salvation. His intercession with men—"Let these go their way" must prevail also. It was His doing in miniature what He had come to do, and was now doing, for the world—consenting to be Himself bound if those He came to save might go free.

The traitor had served the authorities well. In doing their work he had flung himself headlong into an abyss of misery. "What had they to do with that? Let him see to it." They had other work on hand. Meanwhile the armed men rush forward and seize Jesus.

XIV.

SUCCESSORS TO JUDAS.

THE crime of Judas was one of the deepest dye. A kiss and a betrayal stand at opposite extremes, and cannot be made to meet, except by bending back Nature, and making her cry out for agony.

Was Judas, then, a monster of iniquity such as the world had never seen before, nor is likely to see again? Is his crime unparalleled in kind, as well as unequalled in degree? Is there little danger of any one following his footsteps at however great a distance? The danger is extreme. The world is full of men who have more or less of the spirit of Judas; men who, professing to show the highest kindness to a friend, are designedly inflicting on him the deepest injury. Christian society, as it is called, abounds in Joabs, who say to Amasa, "Art thou in health,

my brother?" and kiss him, and with a hidden sword smite him in the fifth rib.

What is the name of the man who, with flattery on his lips, lust in his eyes, and guile in his heart, dares to betray bright young innocence with a kiss of spurious love?

"One saw her loveliness, and, with desire
Unhallowed burning, to her ear addressed
Dishonest words: 'Her favour was his life,
His heaven; her frown his woe, his night, his death.'
With turgid phrase, thus wove in flattery's loom,
He on her womanish nature won, and age
Suspicionless; and ruined and forsook;
For he a chosen villain was at heart,
And capable of deeds that durst not seek repentance."

Or, take the companion picture which the pencil of inspiration has painted. What is the name of the woman who, when a young man void of understanding passed through the street, near her corner, going the way to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night—met him with the attire of a harlot, and caught him and kissed him, and with her much fair speech caused him to yield; with the

flattering of her lips forced him, till he went after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks? What is the name of the man who, greedy of gain, and reckless of all interests except his own, tempts the widow and the fatherless to place their scanty all in his remorseless hands; and then, without a qualm, beholds his victims plunged in poverty and ruin? Or, what is that man's name who, to advance his selfish ends or forward his base purposes, leads his unsuspecting, confiding neighbour on the ice, and, when sign of danger appears, deserts and leaves him to his fate? A monarch and a man of God could at one time have given the reply. Deeper treachery, and at the same time more concealed, there could not be than that which David practised toward the brave Uriah, when, through his own hands, he sent a letter to the commander-in-chief, to this effect: "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die."

At first sight, an important element may

appear to be wanting which entered into the crime of Judas. In these cases it is transgression between man and man ; in the case of Judas it was transgression between man and God. The special element, however, may not be wanting. For, not to speak of the general principle that all transgressions against God's creatures are transgressions against Himself, it is a fundamental law of Christ's kingdom that He and His subjects are one. He identifies Himself with even the least of them. Saul may persecute the Christians ; but the question which Christ puts to him is, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" How many betrayers of fellow-men through this law become betrayers of the Son of man, and bring their betrayal, in this respect, up to the level of the crime of Judas ! Over all that obey Him, when they suffer, Christ throws the shield of His protection, and to the traitor puts the question, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss ?" His warning still is, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that

a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the midst of the sea."

But there is more. With the Son of man *we* have directly to do. By our profession of Christianity we say to Christ, "Hail, Master!" and kiss Him. In private devotions, in public ordinances, in holy sacraments we are perpetually repeating this. And we are doing only what we should do. The gospel is summed up in the sentence, "Kiss ye the Son ;" and obedience to that invitation is the reception of the gospel. Our Christianity thus places us in perilous circumstances by making it possible for us to do what Judas did—to betray the Son of man, and to betray Him with a kiss. If *we* betray Him at all, it must be with a kiss.

What is it, then, to betray the Son of man? Every transgression is not betrayal. The sleeping apostles were transgressors, but not traitors. To call every transgression by that name would be, either to make little of betrayal, or to charge ourselves or others foolishly. A Christian is guilty of sin when at any time he is less loyal

to Christ than he ought to be. But the traitor is he who makes gain of godliness, and thus however unconsciously, trades on the Lord's most blessed name. The man is guilty of sin who reads God's Word less reverently than he ought to do. But the traitor is he who, having bought the truth, sells it, and joins in scoff and scorn at its holy utterances. The man is guilty of sin who builds less zealously than he ought to do the kingdom of the Lord. He is the traitor who makes merchandise of the souls of men; who, by pandering to their vices, or pampering their tastes, or playing on their weaknesses, or making capital of their blunders, knowingly does what cannot but contribute to the building of the synagogue of Satan.

Do *we* feel as if a traitor's spirit had been more or less ours? And are we reproaching ourselves on that account? Are we sometimes miserable at the thought that we have often solemnly said, "Lord, Lord!" and as often in heart and conduct denied Him? Alas! we may well abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and

ashes. Our sin is great. But oh, marvellous grace! Even though our sin reached up to that of Judas, the very Lord whom we may have been betraying is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him ; the very blood on which we may have been trampling can cleanse from all sin. Let us hasten to our God. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, let the desolating hail-storm of remorse become the genial shower of repentance. Let us wash in the atoning blood. And, doing this, let us cease to deny the Lord who bought us. Let us flee the traitor's doom. He shall be beaten with many stripes. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and

hath counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Looking at the history of Judas, how thankful a Christian should be if, through God's grace, he has hitherto in some measure preserved a consistent character, and adorned the doctrine of Christ! How thankful he should be if, up till now, he has been kept from falling in such a way as to give a shock to his moral nature, and to make him a stumbling-block to others! Happy is the follower of Christ who, in such circumstances, finishes a lengthened course! He need not be sorry to depart. For him to die is surely gain. It is to have a life which has been approved by God, sealed up for ever, beyond the possibility of loss or stain. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

XV.

THREATENED RESCUE.

THE sight of Jesus, a prisoner in the hands of His enemies, was too much for the apostles. It set their whole being on fire. "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" they cried (Luke 22: 49). A few moments before, Judas had called Him "Rabbi." The apostles call Him "Lord." To them He was not less "Lord" that He was now a captive. Though they had felt unable to watch with Him, they feel able to die for Him. That is quite intelligible. Sometimes we are more able to encounter a great danger than a small one. For the former, we gather up all our energies, and feel strong; for the latter, we think that unnecessary, and feel weak. The apostles were involuntarily doing their best to redeem the pledge they

had given to stand by their Master at all hazards. They could not but know that it was certain death to offer resistance. Their weapons consisted of two swords. Eleven untrained men with two swords would have been a poor match for the armed band that confronted them. All the more, on this account, did their determination redound to their heroism and loyalty.

Without giving Jesus time to reply, one of the apostles, who carried a sword, draws it, and, attracted perhaps by the officiousness of the man, makes a cut at the head of a servant of the high priest, of the name of Malchus. The sword grazes the head, but severs the right ear. It is scarcely necessary to ask who this apostle was. In his bold act Peter was only true to his character. But the act was more bold than wise. It is a wonder that it did not cost Peter, and indeed all of them, their life. Their escape was, no doubt, owing to the interposition of Jesus, which would be instantaneous, as blood must have been flowing fast from the wound. Luke,

who gives an account of the cure, informs us that Jesus said, "Suffer ye thus far," and then touched the man's ear and healed him (Luke 22: 51). The fact that He touched the ear, even though He Himself was under arrest, gives probability to the interpretation, which makes, "Suffer ye thus far" (*Ἐὰντε ἕως τούτου*), a request on Jesus's part for a certain amount of freedom for the moment. If so, what a study He presents! Compassion for the wounded man; desire to repair the injury inflicted by Peter in more ways than one; consciousness of power, and yet a voluntary renunciation of it; submissiveness to the authorities to whom He had surrendered, are all there, and are all harmonised. The cure was manifestly miraculous. With all the growth of surgical science, an ear severed by a sword is not instantaneously healed. The cure was as patent as the cut, and in so far as it was observed, it must have excited bewildering astonishment. Speaking of the first miracle of Jesus, John says, "This beginning of miracles did

Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." The miracle He now performed was one of the last golden gleams of the Sun of Righteousness, ere it passed for a moment into total eclipse on Calvary.

The evil consequences of Peter's rashness having been repaired, Jesus turns to him and says, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Jesus speaks as "a being related to the whole human race." It is remarkable how often He utters truths which anticipate the progress of ages, and which mankind endorses only after that progress is attained. The proposition which he lays down, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," is one of broadest application to the world.

In the case before us it bears on the use of the sword in connection with His kingdom. However good Peter's intentions were, his views regarding the use of the sword on that occasion were entirely wrong. As he himself came to see it, the sword is good, if a man use it lawfully. It has its own place and function. Its *place* is the hand of the civil ruler. Though Jesus commanded Peter to put up his sword into its sheath, when it was drawn in Jesus's defence, He gave no such command to the authorities when their swords were drawn for His arrest. "Submit yourselves," Peter says in one of his Epistles, "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him." The *function* of the sword is, "for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

In the kingdom which Christ has come to set up, the sword has no place but the sheath, and no function but that of continuing there. "Put up thy sword into the sheath." "Put up

again thy sword into his place." The only result of the introduction of the sword into God's kingdom is disaster; disaster to those against whom it is used, and still greater disaster to those who use it. "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." We speak not here of the exceptional circumstances in which individuals or churches may be placed, through questions, affecting both civil and religious liberty, coming to be mixed up together. But history in all ages has made it plain that individuals or churches, which have attempted to propagate Christianity through the use of the sword, which have either themselves persecuted, or called in the aid of the civil power for that purpose, have been not only the cruel foes of those they persecuted, but the still more cruel foes of themselves. The sword of Christianity is the sword of the Spirit. The religion of Jesus can be *forced* on no nation, no man, no child. "Suffer the little children to *come* unto me." Compulsion must be the compulsion of reason and love—persuasion.

Peter was forgetting the object of God's kingdom. It was not like the kingdoms of the world. "My kingdom," said Jesus, a short time after, to Pilate, "is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Had it been a question of opposing force to force, Peter's sword would have been all right when it leaped from its scabbard; and one word from Jesus to His Father would have surrounded the little band with twelve legions of angels. But the question was one, not of force, but of principle. The mission on which Jesus had come was the reconciliation of God and man. There was but one way in which that was to be accomplished. Without the shedding of His blood there was to be no remission of sin. What, then, though the sword of Peter or the presence of twelve legions of angels had scattered their foes, and set Jesus free, if His mission remained unaccomplished, and the Scriptures which unfolded that mission

were left unfulfilled! Peter and his brother apostles must rise to the greatness of the opportunity to which their Lord and Master had called them. What was needed was, not that Peter by his sword should set Jesus free, but that Jesus by His blood should set Peter free, and lead forth a captive world into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It was no more a sword that had to be drawn by Peter; it was a cup that had to be drunk by Jesus. His Father had mingled that cup. Cruel men had, indeed, taken a part in preparing it; gall and wormwood, shame and agony and death itself were in it; still His Father had mingled it, and given it to Him. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

The *gradation* in Jesus's feelings regarding the cup is very striking. When first He tastes it, He shrinks back, and prays, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." A short time elapses, and He grasps the cup,

and says, "My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." And now, in triumph, He is ready to drain it. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" As if there could not, should not, must not, be a moment's hesitation about drinking the cup which His Father had given Him. Dread is now swallowed up in victory.

The same *gradation* of feeling in connection with trials and death itself is experienced by many Christians. Not by all. Some never find it possible in deep affliction to rise to the jubilant feelings of the prophet: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." So, too, with longing heart they read of a triumph in dying which it is not given to them to share. And yet, with their lower level of feeling, because

they are resting on the Rock of Ages, they are safe, perfectly safe, in life and death. But many others do rise to the higher level of Christian consciousness. They go from strength to strength. From the humbler attainment of silent resignation to the will of God in trial, they rise to the higher attainment of saying, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." And, if all their lifetime they are more or less subject to bondage through fear of death, and are startled at its first approach, they yet, through the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, gradually pass into perfect peace, and, amid the blinding tears of friends, their undimmed eye is radiant with the glory which is beaming on them from the better land.

The secret of such attainment is, largely, the heart learning from its depths to cry, as Jesus did, "Abba, Father." The more it learns to do that, the better is it able to say with Him, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Some of the ingredients may be very distasteful to flesh and blood ; the draught

when partaken of may bring us very low ; but if our Father in heaven has mingled the cup, the ingredients must be right ; they must be in exact proportions, not a grain of the bitter too much, nor of the sweet too little ; and the lowness to which we are brought must be preparation for the youth and bloom of immortality.

It has been a favourite task with many to contrast the feelings of Jesus in the prospect of death with those of Socrates in the same circumstances, and to give the palm to the latter. Apart from the fact that Jesus was more than man, before any fair comparison could possibly be made, it would be necessary that the cups of suffering which they drank should essentially correspond. This cannot be. Jesus's cup had elements in it unknown to the deepest human woe. If from the drinking of that cup there was at first, on the part of Jesus, a shrinking which Socrates could not know, there was in the partaking of it a victory which Socrates could not share.

But, leaving these considerations out of ac-

count, let us see whether what was grand in Socrates, when he was about to drink the cup of hemlock, was not grander still in Jesus, when He was about to drink the cup which His Father had given Him. "The picture," says Grote, "which the dialogue (Phædo) presents of the temper and state of mind of Socrates during the last hours of his life is one of immortal beauty and interest." With manifest admixture of human imperfection, his conduct appears not unworthy of him, whom the oracle pronounced the wisest of mankind. His refusal to avail himself of an opportunity to escape ; the lofty communings of his great spirit with his friends ; his unbroken calm as he drank the fatal cup, while those around him were dissolved in tears, cannot but command the highest admiration. Look now to Jesus. He had only to lift His voice, and twelve legions of angels would have encamped about Him. That voice He never lifted. On human ear there never fell words like those which, on the night before His death, He spoke to His friends. These friends forsook Him and fled. The particular form of

death which Socrates was condemned to die combined, we are told, the minimum of pain with the minimum of indignity. The form of death which Jesus suffered did exactly the opposite. It combined the maximum of pain with the maximum of indignity. And yet, with all this, His calmness is unruffled ; and the springs of that calm are unconquerable love to man and loyalty to God. It is these that are triumphing ; so that in depths of woe which the world shall never fathom He lavishes fond affection on friends ready to desert Him ; with tender compassion prays for foes thirsting for His blood ; to a repentant thief opens wide the gates of Paradise ; speaks sweetest comfort to His agonised mother, and passes away with words of unwavering trust on His quivering lips—" Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

XVI.

THE ROYAL CAPTIVE.

THE captive was a King. His enemies knew not. But they felt it ; for He was leading it captivity captive. He had spoken to His apostles ; He now addresses the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders. As innocent and free till now, He points out the folly of their proceedings. As a King, He protests against His capture, and their mode of it, as an invasion of His royal rights and dignity. "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me ? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matt. 26 : 55). Possibly these last words are a continuation of what Jesus said. Mark's ac-

count leaves that impression still more strongly. Luke adds words evidently spoken by Jesus: "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

What could these men think when they heard themselves thus addressed by their prisoner? They knew that He was speaking only the truth, and they must have felt that He was speaking it royally. As for Himself, it seemed to unburden His weary heart to give utterance to His feelings. He appeared to find rest in remembering that all the indignities heaped on Him were but in accordance with His Father's will and word, and the permission, for a brief space, given to wicked men and the rulers of darkness to do their worst. He felt that all that concerned Him was, as much as ever it had been, in the hands of His Father. Surely it must have been now that Peter and John gathered that inspiration from their Master, which led them, not many days after to declare: "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod

and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

Whether anything unrecorded happened at this point, we do not know ; but now "all the disciples forsook him and fled." The request which He had made to the authorities in their behalf would so far protect them ; but there are things to indicate that immediate choice between flight or sharing their Master's fate had become essential. We have no means of knowing whither they fled in the cold dead of night ; they would hardly know themselves. Judas must have slunk away—of all men the most miserable—to go to his own place. The apostles had no place except that which they had deserted—the bosom of their Lord. There He now stood, the Son of God, and the Son of man, a prisoner in the hands of His enemies, forsaken by all. He was treading the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him. He was not yet so alone as in a

short time He would be. A loneliness was at hand which would wring from Him the saddest cry the world has ever heard. As yet, however, amid universal desertion by man, He could feel that the Father was with Him. But to a soul so tender, so loving, so sympathetic as His, the gloom of present loneliness must have been terrible. Desertion undeserved wounds to the quick. It was like to break Paul's brave heart to find, on one occasion, that no man stood with Him, that all had forsaken Him. It would have broken it, had not the Lord, as he tells us, stood with him and strengthened him. The Lord came to Paul's rescue, not only because He was Paul's Advocate, but also because He knew, through actual suffering, the heart of a deserted man. Let the follower of Christ, who is exposed to the trial of desertion by friends, remember that in Him he has a brother who, from personal experience, sympathises to the uttermost.

And yet, as they were leaving the Garden of Gethsemane, on their way to the judgment-hall

in Jerusalem, that lonely captive was a triumphant conqueror. He seemed to be marching to a cross; He was in reality marching to a crown. More than ever was He the Elect of the Father in whom His soul delighted. From their heavenly thrones angels would bend, desiring to look into these things. He would feel the inspiration of their earliest song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." For the joy that was set before Him He could endure the cross, despising the shame. Love itself, He could not but love the world, even when it hated Him, and cling to the men who had turned their backs upon Him.

Meanwhile the world goes on as if nothing unusual were taking place. Jerusalem is buried in sleep, and the only exception we hear of, is a young man referred to by Mark—by some thought to be Mark himself—who appears to have been suddenly aroused, and, without taking time to dress himself fully, to have hurried in the direction of the armed band. If we may

judge from the few words recorded about him, his interest and sympathy were but ill-requited, as he was glad to escape naked out of the hands of the rude and boisterous throng.

But though the world knew not its Lord, it was already owning His power. Like some concealed magnet exerting its mysterious influence, He had already begun to attract the scattered apostles to Himself. John was even now running after Him, and Peter was following afar off. Not many days were to pass ere each of the eleven should be drawn nearer Him than ever they had been before, and He, without any danger of their loyalty being impaired, should ascend from their midst to His unseen throne above. Within the heaven of heavens, having the seven Spirits in His right hand, He has ever since continued to exert His mighty spell on the inhabitants of the globe, and never shall He cease from His wondrous working till His own words shall be fulfilled: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And not merely throughout this world, but in

all the worlds that glide in glory through space illimitable, is the power of His attraction felt. Around Him, as the central Sun, universal being shall for ever circulate, and by the force of that love which poured itself forth in strong crying and tears in the Garden of Gethsemane, He shall hold creation in unchanging harmony and eternal rapture. "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

XVII.

THE GREAT MYSTERY.

MYRIADS of the human race are every year passing out of the world with the name of Jesus Christ on their lips. That is a most remarkable fact. No doubt multitudes of these attach very little true meaning to that holy name. Nevertheless, in front of the great world beyond, they do utter it ; it is the name of their latest memory and of their latest breath, Whatever meaning they attach to it, in that name they profess a desire to trust. But with vast numbers the name of Jesus is not only on their dying lips, but it is engraven on their hearts. Knowing whom they are believing, they feel toward Him as all their salvation and all their desire. Their only regret is that their confidence in Him is not infinitely stronger. How

many of our own dear friends have passed away with such accents on their quivering lips! And it makes our heart right glad to think that they have done so. We ourselves long to be able to do the same when our dying day comes.

In the face of a fact so striking, there is no question in which the human race can have a deeper interest than the question: "Who is Jesus Christ?" If in resting on Him men are wrong, the havoc wrought is extreme. If, on the other hand, men are right, the name of Jesus should, like ointment, be poured forth throughout the whole globe.

It is natural to expect that the Saviour of the world should be a Being at once commanding universal admiration and confidence. It is the upsetting of all preconceived ideas of Him to be told that "he shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Peter but expressed the instinctive feeling of the heart when, on Christ's telling the

disciples of His approaching sufferings, he took Him and began to rebuke Him: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Christ's reply is memorable: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

If we accept the narrative of Gethsemane, the difficulty of the problem of "life on earth," which Christ in His own case had to solve, exceeds conception. His life was comprehended by *God*. All along its line must have run the echoes of the voice which was heard at baptism: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But as He was "seen by *angels*," great even to them must have appeared "the mystery of godliness." To the *world*, with blinded mind and hardened heart, His life could not fail to be inexplicable. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."

Even had it been possible for Jesus to appear simply as God, with the splendours of divinity

sufficiently veiled for mortal eyes, He would not have been received by the world. If He had been only a man, though perfect, He would not have commanded the universal homage of His fellow-men. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

When the Divine and human natures were combined, when He who tabernacled among us was the Word made flesh, the difficulty of His life on the earth became immeasurably increased. There was continual danger either of His divinity seeming to narrow and discolour His humanity, or of His humanity appearing to contract and distort His divinity.

The difficulty rose to its highest pitch when, as Mediator, He became our Surety. A Being so composite necessarily subjects His character to the greatest possible strain.

Let us try to set before us some of the more prominent necessities imposed on Jesus Christ.

He must not for a moment cease to be God, and yet He must at all times be "found in fashion as a man." He must not for a moment

resign one jewel in His crown, and yet He must descend into depths of humiliation lower than man ever trod. At one and the same time He must be possessed of Divine and human attributes. He must be in possession of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence as God, and of their contraries as man. His Divine attributes must act in unison with His human, and His human with His Divine ; and both must act in concert with the conditions of the great mission which He had come to fulfil. In Him there must be no sin, though "on him the Lord laid the iniquity of us all." At one and the same time He must be the Son and the servant of the Father ; the worshipped and the worshipper ; King of kings, and yet Cæsar's subject ; ruler of His enemies, and yet a captive in their hands.

Through the endless perilous mazes, which such necessities every instant imposed on Him, Jesus Christ threaded His wondrous way, and came forth crowned with victory. Every step He took in the garden of Gethsemane is a proof of this.

How grandly He solved the problem of the life which was set before Him, and bore the strain that was put upon His character, we may learn from the opinions formed regarding Him in His own and succeeding generations.

So thoroughly were His two natures, the Divine and human, united, and so harmoniously did they work together, that, for the most part, it is unsafe or even impossible for us to distinguish between their actings. So completely has He satisfied men of His humanity, that multitudes of keenest intellect have insisted that He was only man. So fully has He impressed men with the conviction that He was more than man, that from hosts of reluctant minds He has wrung the confession that He was "*a* Son of God." So entirely has He satisfied men of His Godhead, that the well-nigh universal voice of Christendom in all ages has been, "This is *the* Son of God." So lovingly did He carry men's sorrows, that, in His own time and ever since, He has been charged with human infirmities out of harmony with perfec-

tion. And yet so unspotted was His life, that, unrebuked He could give, and still gives, this challenge to the world: "Which of you convinceth" ("convicteth," R. V.) "me of sin?" So truly did He bear the sins of men, that, though God, as well as man, He groaned under the load of suffering which these sins entailed. And yet, so triumphantly did He bear them, that the multitude which no man can number, now in heaven, though He was man as well as God, staked their eternal destiny on washing their robes, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.

On the supposition that Jesus was what the narrative of Gethsemane represents Him to be, what one thing should He, or could He, have done different from what He did? It is easy to say that during His agony the glory of His Godhead might have shone out more than it did. But how, then, could the Scripture have been fulfilled: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"? When a child, forsaking the path of virtue, takes

up abode in some low den of infamy, how does the loving father act? Between his soul and the polluted atmosphere of that den there is no affinity. The very thought of visiting it is unspeakable misery; and he knows that his appearance there will send into the lost one's bosom a pang of stinging agony. And yet not for a moment does he hesitate to follow the lost one. So it was with Jesus. In descending into the gulf of Gethsemane's woe He knew the misconstruction which in all ages would be put on that descent. He knew the amazement with which some, and the derision with which others, would hear of His having become weak as one of themselves. He knew that the world's confidence would be withheld on the very grounds which should inspire and strengthen it. But through Gethsemane's fire and water He held on His way, to seek and to save that which was lost. Never does the glory of Jesus shine more brightly than in the silent submission of Himself to necessary suffering, at whatever risk of His conduct being misunderstood. When

He was hanging on the cross, He was taunted with the cry: "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Since then, multitudes have said, "Away with Gethsemane's cup, and we will believe him." He knew it all; but, bent on saving others, even though Himself He could not save, He said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

In the eyes of some who believe in the necessity of the cup being partaken of, Jesus would have stood forth as more manifestly a perfect man, had He, instead of shrinking, at once accepted it. But would not others with deeper insight into the contents of the cup have felt that, if there had been no recoil, the chain of sympathy between Him and men was broken; and that, in moments of supreme agony, men had lost their only possible Friend. It would have intensely gratified some, had Jesus withstood the armed men who came to arrest Him. The putting forth of a very little more power than He did would certainly have left them

lying on the ground dead men. But what would have been the result? No surrender of Himself to death meant surrender of us to death eternal. And if it be said, "Why then did He not, without a word, place Himself in the hands of His enemies?" the answer is plain. It was needful that He should assert His royal power and majesty. Had He not done so, there would have been room for His enemies to turn round on His followers and say, "Where is now thy God?"

If in all that Jesus did, no difference should or could have been made, there is not a single element in His nature or character which could be eliminated, without effectually damaging both, and entirely destroying consistency in the narrative.

Subtract His Godhead. Reduce Him to a man. He cannot now be a perfect man. His character is robbed of its brightest jewels. Words which in His mouth, as God and man, were appropriate, now assume an opposite character. Claims of royal dignity which before were just are now

transformed into usurpation. Let Him cease to be the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. As a sufferer, His nature is less perfect than that of many of His brethren. Or, remove His sinlessness. Suppose Him a man guilty of errors and foibles, however trifling and however few. You lower His whole character. According to the supposition, He does what in the case of a good man would issue in contrition and confession ; but even in life's last hours, there is sign of neither in Jesus. From weak fellow-men He requires a perfection which He Himself has not attained ; and, though needing atonement for His own sins first, He makes atonement only for the sins of the people. The same process might be gone through in the case of every other part of His nature and character. It is only when all the parts are united in one harmonious whole that the glory of Jesus Christ, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, shines complete. You have, then, a marvellous Being, fitting entirely into the narrative, explaining all, illustrating all, fulfilling all. Such an one cannot but be

real. The very conception of such a Being is beyond the reach of man or angel. Perfect as man, He must have come from God ; He must have been with God ; He must have been God.

XVIII.

MIGHTY TO SAVE.

JESUS CHRIST claims the allegiance of the world. The claim is simply in consistence with His nature and character, as well as with His mission. A man may sway the sceptre of the world throughout all generations, but he must be more than man ; he must be also God. God, not claiming universal homage, would be no God. To Jesus Christ the sovereignty of the world belongs in a way in which it cannot belong even to God alone.

“It was thine

By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth ;
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,
And overpaid its value with thy blood.”

If Jesus claims the allegiance of the world, He claims the allegiance of every individual inhabitant. Our goodness may not extend to Him,

but His goodness extends to us. Every soul is His, and priceless in His eyes. "The stars are but the shining dust" of His abode ; His heart is set on our sharing that abode along with Him. He is our God. Shall we accept or refuse His love ? He is our King. Shall we accept or refuse His sceptre ? Shall we accept a yoke which is liberty and life, or a yoke which is slavery and death ? And after all, beyond His sceptre we cannot pass. Our only choice really is, His sceptre of love, or His rod of iron. To Him we can surrender our whole being without compromise. To man or angel we may surrender much ; but within every bosom there are kingly powers which refuse to call man or angel, lord. We are safe in saying of Jesus Christ, "We will have this man to reign over us." Were any being, short of God, to occupy the throne of our heart, we should always have to look beyond Him for supreme authority. But when He, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, is our King, we are complete in Him. He is the Head of all principality and power.

He, indeed, brings us to God ; but then He and the Father are one.

When the thought of self-surrender to the Lord for the first time finds a lodgment in the mind, it is sure to be invaded by the stern inquiry, "What of past relations to God? Have they not been such that hope of joyful reconciliation and abiding friendship is gone?" Out of the darkness of Gethsemane light arises ; out of its depths comes the voice, "Fear not." In the presence of that light and that voice, it is not possible to believe that God is *unwilling to forgive*. Such unwillingness would imply inconsistency on His part. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" It would imply more than inconsistency. Through the atonement made by His Son God has graciously placed Himself under obligations to forgive. Compassion and love no longer alone move Him ; fidelity and justice constrain Him to bestow forgiveness on all that, repenting, believe in Jesus. "If we confess our

sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

If willingness to forgive cannot be wanting, *ability* cannot. If on earth the Son of man had power to forgive sins, the Son of God in heaven has not less power. The New Testament glows with the thought, "He is able": "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him": "able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day."

And forgiveness is not one-half of the royal boon. It is but a first step in the golden ladder which reaches from earth to heaven. Whom He pardoned, "them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Forgiveness by God transcends all earthly experience. The burning love which the father showered on his penitent prodigal son grows pale before the love which our Father in heaven has in store for all that listen to the invitation: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father

unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Self-surrender to the Lord may be attended with another difficulty. Some find it hard, intellectually, to believe in Him. This need excite no wonder when the problem of His life on the earth was so difficult. But the intellectual difficulty may spring from a moral obstacle. It always does so more or less; it often does so entirely. To the Jews Christ crucified was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But what is the explanation which the apostle gives to the Greeks of this state of things? It is this: "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Speaking of his distaste at one time for the Scriptures, Augustine says, "They seemed to me unworthy to be compared to the stateliness of Tully; for my swelling pride shrunk from their lowliness, nor could my sharp wit

pierce the interior thereof. Yet were they such as would grow up in a little one. But I disdained to be a little one ; and, swoln with pride, took myself to be a great one."

In such circumstances man is responsible for his unbelief. "Ye *will* not come to me—ye are not willing to come to me—that ye might have life." Let the unwillingness disappear, and the intellectual difficulty will gradually vanish. One great encouragement is supplied by experience. It is when Christ is outside the heart that the difficulty of faith is felt. When once the doors are opened to receive Him, and closed to shut Him in, the difficulty vanishes into confidence and love. If unto them which are disobedient He is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, unto you which believe He is precious. They who know His name place confidence in Him as in no other, and that confidence waxes stronger and stronger, till in the joy of their heart, they feel, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

Whatever difficulty there may be in self-surrender to the Lord, if we honestly desire to make it, the difficulty *must* give way. Through every faculty, by every providence, in all the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit intercedes for Him in our heart. Can His intercedings be in vain? Nay! Unless that Spirit be grieved away permanently, He *must* prevail.

Oh! if hitherto we have withheld allegiance from the Lord, let us give it *now*. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Our heavenly Father does not say, "Now or never;" but He does say, "Now and ever;" ever blessed, ever shining more and more unto the perfect day. Young friend; the heart surrendered to the Lord in youth makes old age bright in a way in which it never otherwise could be. It is joy unspeakable to be able on a deathbed to look back to the past, radiant with sunshine, as well as forward to the future, resplendent with glory. It is to have a crown of righteousness placed for ever on our head, to be able to feel, "Our rejoicing is this, the testi-

mony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

"*How* shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Think and say, *How?* Shall God a second time send His Son from heaven to make atonement for our sins? When we neglect the great salvation, do we not say that God has sent His Son in vain, and that Christ has died in vain? Shall we rest satisfied in the belief that our sins are not such as to throw us outside the compassion of a Father in heaven? What comfort can this thought afford, when we neglect that very compassion as it is offered to us, and cover ourselves eternally with the guilt of rejecting it? Shall we take refuge in the blood of Christ for the pardon of our sins, and through our virtues thus purged, hope to find a place in heaven? What! Divide the great salvation! Take of it what we think we need, and set aside the rest! Is Christ divided? Nay; Christ is all. Christ is all, or nothing.

"God is not mocked." Sin can lie, only on one or other of two spots, either on the head of man, the sin-doer, or on the head of Jesus Christ, the sin-bearer. If lying on the head of the sin-bearer, it made His "soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death," what shall become of the sin-doer, if it continue to lie on him? If judgment began with the Son of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not His gospel?

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

Allegiance to the Lord is obligation to serve Him *for ever*. What happier condition could be attached to His service than perpetuity? Under law to Christ! His life was a joyful embodiment of obedience to the law of God. And He left us an example that we should follow His steps, walking behind Him, but yet close to Him, and led by His Spirit. This is the path of peace. The example which He left is not

only perfect in itself, but forms a perfect pattern for every one of His countless followers. There are no circumstances in which any one of them can be placed, where he may not find in Christ a pattern, which it is ever safe to copy, because it is so pure; ever possible to copy, because it is so simple; ever inspiring to copy, because it is so attractive. Happy under law to Him now, His followers shall be still happier under law to Him hereafter. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Homes as well as hearts are happy in proportion as that example rules them. Parents; never forget that the loyalty of your children to you is most likely to be secured by your own allegiance to the Lord. That allegiance, as seen in you, is the richest inheritance you can leave to your children. There is good hope of its descending to them. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteous-

ness unto children's children ; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Amid the vicissitudes of life how enviable such an inheritance is, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away" !

Life is worth having ; life is sublime in proportion as it is directly or indirectly spent in conquering the world for Christ. Of His splendid legacy, peace through His blood, Christians are the appointed trustees : "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Let us be faithful to the trust, by universal distribution of the good news of the unsearchable riches. Christ in heaven is shut out from visible personal ministry, but through the Holy Spirit He is continuing and finishing that ministry as it was begun on earth. Let us lend ~~Him our~~ body and soul, that, as He sits on the throne, His voice may still be the voice which was heard as He trod the earth : "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he

hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The glorious issue is certain—the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord—the jubilee of the world, and the coronation of Christ as Lord of all.

NOTES.

I.

(1) Page 5.—Referring to the farewell addresses of Jesus, Strauss says that even in them “the fourth evangelist has only worked up and expanded the materials handed down to him by his predecessors.” —*Strauss's “New Life of Jesus,”* vol. ii. p. 333. 1865.

(2) Page 6.—According to Strauss (“*New Life of Jesus,*” vol. ii. p. 327), the reason why the history of the Passion is wanting in the Fourth Gospel is “that the Logos Christ of the Johannine Gospel was once for all elevated above the sphere of trials of this kind.” This is substantially the view held by Keim. But then, referring to John 12 : 27, Strauss (p. 330) says that there John is trying to combine “features out of the history of the Transfiguration with features out of that of the Agony in the Garden.” Is it not strange that even in John's corrected account of the Passion, an account in which the Passion is irradiated with gleams of glory from the Transfigura-

tion, John feels it necessary to represent Jesus as saying, "Now is my soul troubled?" (*τεράσασθαι*). This, Bengel interprets, "concurrebat horror mortis."

(3) Page 8.—In the Revised Version this verse concludes, "but *this is done* that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." The italics show that the words "this is done" are not in the Greek.

II.

(1) Page 16.—The *seeming* contradiction between the synoptists' statements and John's as to time appears to be best dealt with by accepting the statements of the synoptists, which are direct and definite, and then meeting the difficulties (surely not insuperable) presented by John's account.

III.

(1) Page 23.—"All that we can safely say is, that during his last days the enormous weight of the mission he had accepted pressed cruelly upon Jesus. Human nature asserted itself for a time. Perhaps he began to hesitate about his work. Terror and doubt took possession of him, and threw him into a state of exhaustion worse than death. He who has sacrificed his repose and the legitimate rewards of

life to a great idea always experiences a feeling of revulsion when the image of death presents itself to him for the first time, and seeks to persuade him that all has been in vain."—*Rénan's "Life of Jesus."*

(2) Page 28.—"It is true that even in the conception of the synoptists, the suffering of Jesus is a vicarious one for the sins of many." . . . "According to the idea of the Evangelists, in Gethsemane also, it was not immediately the feeling of the misery of humanity which occasioned his dismay, but the presentiment of his own suffering, which, however, was encountered in the stead of mankind."—*Strauss's "Life of Jesus,"* vol. iii. p. 180.

(3) Page 30.—Speaking of the great agony, Godet says, "This time the anguish is such that it is impossible not to recognise the intervention of a supernatural agent." And he refers to "the cup" as "the symbol of that terrible punishment, the dreadful and mournful picture of which is traced before Him at this moment by a skilful painter with extraordinary vividness. The painter is the same who in the wilderness, using a like illusion, passed before His view the magical scene of the glories belonging to the Messianic kingdom."

VII.

(1) Page 56.—This paragraph is retained entire in the Revised Version.

(2) Page 60.—Referring to the expression “as it were” (*ὡσεύ*), Bengel says that the force of it rests on the word “drops,” not on the word “blood,” as is manifest from the participle, “falling down,” agreeing with drops and not with blood ; and that there can be no doubt the sweat was bloody. It is striking that water and blood flowed from His wounded side when He was hanging on the cross. “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood” (1 John 5 : 6).

VIII.

(1) Page 77.—“That ye enter not into temptation.” “This saying is singled out by St. Luke, and impressively placed at the beginning and the end of the whole scene of Christ’s present trial—its superscription and postscript at once.”—*Stier*.

XI.

(1) Page 102.—Might not the apparent discrepancy between Matthew and Mark have been so far avoided by translating Mark’s *τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπών*, not “speaking the same words,” but “the same word,” or “the same sentiment?” The Revised Version has it, “saying the same words.”

(2) Page 103.—Speaking of the dissipation of the cloud from Jesus’s mind, Rénan says, “There remains

only the incomparable hero of the Passion, the founder of the rights of free conscience, and the complete model which all suffering souls will contemplate in order to fortify and console themselves."—"Life of *Jesus*."

(3) Page 109.—"Sleep on now, and take your rest, he said to them, sorrowfully bitter."—*Keim*.

(4) Page 110.—"It is enough" (*ἀπὶ χεῖ*). The Revised Version adheres to this translation. The word has presented much difficulty. Some translate it, "It is gone"; "the hour of anguish," or "the hour for watching," or "the time for sleeping is gone." Others make it, "All is over," others, "Enough of dreams," and others, "He (the traitor) is at a distance." Our own version seems the most satisfactory. The word appears to be here a laconic expression almost involuntarily uttered by Jesus on the sudden appearance of the armed band. In his Ode, *Εἰς Κόρην*, Anacreon uses the expression in a somewhat similar way. After describing all her excellencies, he stops abruptly. "*Ἀπὶ χεῖ. βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν*." "Enough. For I see her."

XII.

(1) Page 116.—*Διάβολος*, a slanderer. The Revised Version retains the translation, "a devil." Dr. Campbell, in his translation of the Gospels, makes it "a spy."

(2) Page 118.—'εβάραζεν, "bare." The word admits of two meanings, "carried," or "carried off." The Revised Version makes it "having the bag (he) took away what was put therein." But in a footnote it is, "Or, carried what was put therein." The word is in bad company, as immediately following the information that Judas was "a thief."

XIII.

(1) Page 125.—It is curious to observe the keenness with which different parties have contended for what they regard as the precise order of events. The question as to whether Judas first gave the kiss is not one of supreme importance, and a great deal may be fairly urged on both sides. The distinct utterances of Matthew and Mark seem to determine the order. Though there are difficulties connected with supposing that the kiss was first given, these appear to be increased by supposing that it was postponed.

(2) Page 125. — Κατεφίλησεν, "tenderly kissed." According to Matthew and Mark, who alone record the circumstance, the sign agreed on between Judas and the authorities was, "Ὁν ἂν φιλήσω. In speaking of the kiss as actually given, both make use of the word, κατεφίλησεν. It is possible that no peculiar stress should be laid on this word. But the Revised Version, though translating it "kissed him," adds a footnote, "Gr.

kissed him much." May the thing not be a touch of nature ; Judas, in his excited state, overdoing what he had promised ?

(3) Page 128.—" I am he." " In the words, ' I am he,' therefore, the whole fulness of what Christ is, the whole divinity of his personality is contained ; thus, when spoken by him, they operate as a supernatural talisman. The expression gets this meaning from the Old Testament." Then, after quoting certain passages from the Old Testament, he adds, " The expression is, therefore, originally an expression of God himself."—*Strauss's " New Life of Jesus,"* vol. ii. p. 339.

(4) Page 128.—The number of examples is indefinitely large. To such well-known cases as those of the Roman Senators, at the time of the invasion of the Gauls, and of the Consul Marius, when he was to be put to death, that of Marie Antoinette, at the time of the French Revolution, may be added. Carlyle gives us a glimpse of the scene from the royal windows at Versailles.

" A roaring sea of human heads, inundating both Courts ; billowing against all passages." " Rascality has slipped its muzzle ; and now bays, three throated, like the Dog of Erebus." On demand the queen shows herself on the balcony, " though there is peril in it." Her little boy and girl are with her, but the mob demands their removal. Alone she stands, " her hands serenely crossed on her breast : ' Should I

die,' she had said, 'I will do it.' Such serenity of heroism has its effect. Lafayette, with ready wit, in his high-flown chivalrous way, takes that fair queenly hand, and, reverently kneeling, kisses it; thereupon the people do shout *Vive la Reine!*"

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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1.1 million (Office of National Statistics 1999). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 10.5 million by 2026, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 6.5 million (Office of National Statistics 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the health care needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has identified the need to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population, and has set out a number of key principles for the development of a new approach. These principles include the need to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population, and to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has identified the need to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population, and has set out a number of key principles for the development of a new approach. These principles include the need to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population, and to develop a new approach to health care for the ageing population.

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